The Idea of Babylon:

Archaeology and Representation in Mesopotamia

Volume I: Text

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own, and that all sources have been duly acknowledged in the text.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a new approach to the history of archaeology in Iraq. The representation of Babylon is taken as a case study through which social, political and cultural factors in the formation and development of European archaeology in Iraq are examined. Babylon's history as the subject of scholarly, religious and moral thought, and of artistic and literary representation, allows the development of archaeological research on the city to be analysed in relation to these other approaches.

The thesis demonstrates that the production of knowledge about the past within modern archaeological discourse is inseparable from a range of non-archaeological epistemologies and traditions of representation, and that the history and historiography of archaeology are therefore vital to the understanding and evaluation of interpretative methods and disciplinary structures in the present. A diverse group of sources on Babylon are brought together, placing the rise of archaeological approaches to ancient Mesopotamia in their cultural context: well known biblical and classical sources, travel writing, poetry, theatre and fine art are all examined in terms of their impact on awareness and understanding of Babylon in modern Europe. Patterns of change and continuity traced in Babylon's historiography as a cultural entity are shown to diverge significantly from the patterns of development usually outlined in histories of archaeology, and yet to be as important in shaping the discipline itself and our knowledge of Babylon within it.

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Chapter 1: Babylon's Moment

Introduction

Working on behalf of the recently formed Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft, Robert Koldewey began excavations at Babylon in March 1899. By the standards of his British and French contemporaries the excavation techniques he applied in Mesopotamia were slow and conscientious; nevertheless, by the end of 1899 "the Procession Street of Marduk was opened up as far as the north-east corner of the Principal Citadel and a cross-cut was driven through the north front of the Principal Citadel" (Koldewey 1914[268]: vi [NB: superscript numbers refer to catalogue numbers in Appendix A, and will be included on first usage of each primary source in this thesis]).

The Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft project is very important for Mesopotamian archaeologists: it represents a huge development in archaeological method in the region. Over the course of their work at Babylon German excavators succeeded in identifying and recording the mud-brick of which most architecture in southern Iraq consisted. The failure of their predecessors in this respect is still visible in the enormous pits dug into some of Iraq's most important urban sites during the nineteenth century. In their methods German excavations between 1899 and 1914 resembled modern excavations far more closely than those of other nations digging in Iraq (Matthews 1997: 58-59; Pollock 1999: 17).

Beyond this technical success, however, lay a more emotive achievement. This first year of excavation at Babylon could be seen as the end of a search that had begun in classical antiquity. Two millennia of fantastic and diverse dreams of the famous city are in one sense ended by the excavation of the Processional Way. Koldewey had uncovered ancient Babylon. When the cultural significance of this action is appreciated, it is easy to understand Koldewey's famous devotion to his discovery – he spent almost fifteen years at the site, and would readily have spent more, as his first words in the English edition of his publication, *The Excavations at Babylon* attest:

> It is most desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that the excavation of Babylon should be completed. Up to the present time only about half the work has been accomplished, although since it began we have worked daily, both summer and winter, with from 200 to 250 workmen.
>
> (Koldewey 1914: v)

Meyers describes Koldewey's unveiling of ancient Babylon to modern Europe:

> Most spectacular... was the discovery of the Processional Way leading to the temple, a roadway lined with walls decorated with colourfully glazed bricks and featuring reliefs of bulls, lions and sacred dragons. Where the Processional Way passed through a monumental gate decorated in glazed blue bricks he located and identified the Ishtar Gate, subsequently completely reconstructed and exhibited at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin – a feat equalling Koldewey's fieldwork.
>
> (Meyers 1997: 39)

Meyers refers here to Walter Andrae's painstaking reconstructions of the Processional Way and Ishtar Gate, displayed in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Pergamon Museum from 1930[273] (Klengel-Brandt 1995: 19). The original excavation of these vividly coloured reliefs (Fig. 1.1) must have been a visually striking experience for the archaeologists, as their eventual display in Berlin (Fig. 1.2) was and is for the public.

The German excavations and their communication transform Babylon, and could be held up to represent the moment at which legend is superseded by physical reality and Babylon enters the empirical, scientific domain of archaeological research. The moment, however, is incomplete. Koldewey's excavation matters, but it does not consign existing ideas about Babylon to the scrap heap; at most it could be claimed to join the existing cacophony of interpretation with a certain authority of voice; an authority whose basis and extent are not always as clear as they might seem. This thesis aims to explore what such moments mean in practice: if not immediate and total transformation, what is the effect of archaeology on the identities of a place people already 'know'? Is there any way in which the archaeological moment of discovery is absolutely different from others (e.g. the traveller's visit and account, the artist's representation)? How do multiple epistemologies and paradigms co-exist and interact in the understanding of a single place? To ask these questions it is necessary to take a broader cultural and historical perspective on archaeological work itself, and to view the development of archaeological approaches in their cultural context.

This thesis uses the case of Babylon to explore several issues relevant to the history of archaeology generally, and the reception and representation of the archaeology of Mesopotamia in particular. It addresses the development of archaeological thought in relation to pre-existing and non-archaeological ideas about the past, and to the social and political contexts of this development. Babylon's long and diverse history of representation provides a case study in which the roles of a broad cultural range of approaches to the past in the formation of archaeological approaches can be examined. The thesis deals with the interaction of these approaches, of different epistemologies and of different uses of the past in culture. It analyses the relationships between them, and demonstrates the importance of those relationships to the history of archaeology and archaeological thought.

Representation and archaeology

The development of representation as a field of theory useful to archaeologists is explored in detail in chapter 2. At this stage it is enough to outline the fundamental argument for its study and use in our attempts to understand the past. For the purposes of this thesis I define representation as:

1. The communication, in any medium, of ideas, knowledge or creative thought.
2. The study of that communication in its own right, as affecting and effecting the meaning and value of that which it purports to express.

The second part of this definition contains the crucial point: "affecting the meaning and value." There is scope for disagreement on the exact phrasing: I have chosen meaning and value because they are relative terms, and I do not specify a point in the communicative process at which they are created; my definition is therefore extremely flexible, but lacks a precision some might consider essential. Accepting this, we can address the proposition that meaning and value, broadly defined, are actually affected and effected by representation. This proposition has two distinct parts, the first of which is far the less contentious. This is the argument that representation can affect meaning and value *in a given instance*. The different approaches taken to today's major news stories in various media and the personal experience of consuming them and evaluating their content should provide a rich demonstration of this. In the same example, one could also say that meaning is effected by representation when elements of pure fiction enter those news stories and give them new implications. The second part of the proposition, however, is that representation can affect and effect meaning and value *per se*, i.e. that phenomena acquire meaning and value through their expression and communication. This argument leads to the issue of relativism, and the genuinely contentious point in studying the representation of the past.

> So far as the historical presence of the humanities is concerned, two views are locked in interminable combat. One view interprets the past as an essentially complete history; the other sees history, even the past itself, as still unresolved, still being made, still open to the presence and the challenges of the emergent, the insurgent, the unrequited, and the unexplored.
>
> (Said 2004: 26)

There are two types of approach to the relativism debate. The first is primarily philosophical: to make the case for or against the existence of the "essentially complete history," and to grapple with the implications for the authority of academic knowledge of a past that is "still unresolved, still being made." This has been the form in which the debate has most commonly manifested itself in archaeological theory, and some aspects of this work will be discussed in Chapter 2, *Babylon as Image and Idea*. The second type of approach is primarily historical: to study the development and stability of knowledge about the past in practice, drawing conclusions from this study that bear upon the question of history and the past as essentially complete or essentially unresolved. Although it certainly cannot afford ignorance of the philosophical core of the relativism debate, representation research falls firmly into the second category. The implications of this approach will receive more detailed discussion in Chapter 2.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 discusses the aims of the thesis, its theoretical foundation and issues of method such as selection of sources and division of material for purposes of analysis. It addresses the questions of perspective and of epistemological change that are core to this thesis. This chapter also reviews previous work on the representation of archaeology, and of ancient Mesopotamia in particular.

Chapter 3, *Babylon in Biblical and Classical Sources*, covers the ancient sources on Babylon that have been most influential in the city's later

historiography and representation. The emphasis is on biblical and fifth- and fourth-century Greek accounts, in which are found the original or oldest extant versions of many important themes in the representation of Babylon. This section of the thesis covers all the first-hand accounts of Babylon as a living city – as well as those that have been considered to have equal or greater reliability due to their scriptural or otherwise canonical status – that were available to educated Europeans prior to the development of Mesopotamian archaeology and the decipherment of cuneiform scripts in the nineteenth century. The focus is on relevance to the later uses to which these sources were put, and is intended to allow the reader more easily to follow the combination and conflation of these sources in representations discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the changing representation of Babylon from late antiquity to the nineteenth century. Chapter 4, *The Experience of Babylon*, concentrates on the accounts of visitors to Babylon, or to other sites they believed to be the ancient city. Aspects of knowledge and epistemology, culturally conditioned expectation, narrative style and impact upon the existing corpus of knowledge on Babylon are considered. The changes in understanding and epistemological perspectives between the earliest medieval travellers and the antiquarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be of particular importance. Chapter 5, *The Idea of Babylon*, aims to place these accounts in broader cultural context, considering other means of relating to the Mesopotamian past that have been influential both in the particular representation of Babylon and as examples through which to examine those

changes in European cultural and intellectual paradigms most relevant to the understanding of the ancient – and particularly ancient Mesopotamian – past. Subject matter includes fine art, literature, theatre and music. The unifying theme is Babylon and its place in cultural and intellectual traditions not usually considered as influencing the development of archaeological knowledge.

Together, Chapters 4 and 5 present a new perspective on the history and formation of Mesopotamian archaeology, emphasising the relevance of social and cultural context in the subject's development, and of non-archaeological and non-academic representation to the formation of archaeological questions and approaches. They are also original in their identification of epistemological hybrids in the representation of Babylon, and of the patterns of change and continuity in representation that define the development of Babylon's cultural symbolism between medieval and modern worlds.

Chapter 6, *The German Experience*, is devoted to the archaeological excavation and study of Babylon performed under the auspices of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft 1898-1917. The actions, priorities and strategies of representation employed in this work are examined in terms of the cultural and intellectual history of Chapters 3-5, placing the German work in broader cultural and historical context. The questions of what archaeology is and does in relation to other and pre-existing understandings of the past will be directly addressed through the case study of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft's work in exploration, publication and popularisation of the Mesopotamian past.

Chapter 7, *Knowledge in the Library of Babel*, analyses trends in the representation of Babylon in the wake of the excavations, examining the uses and representations of Babylon in a world where the city itself is excavated and much-studied. The continued use of Babylon in the assertion of cultural and political identities, the use of archaeological and non-archaeological sources in creating new representations and the display in Berlin of material from Babylon are discussed here. This chapter also contains an overview of Babylon's role in identity and political representation with regard to the modern Iraqi state.

Chapter 8, *Idea and Knowledge*, draws together the main patterns identified in the thesis, their implications for understanding archaeology's relationship to cultural history, and that of epistemological change to the understanding of the ancient past. Finally, a concluding summary highlights the most important historical and theoretical outcomes of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Babylon as Image and Idea: Methodological and Theoretical Framework of the Thesis

This chapter covers the methodological and theoretical foundations of the thesis. Following a discussion of the central research questions of the thesis, existing literature on the history of archaeology and archaeological representation is reviewed. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to theoretical issues impacting on the thesis. Many of these are drawn from cultural studies and literary theory, fields developed to deal with cultural representations and signifying practices as a focus, but which, it will be shown, have considerable potential for application in studying the history of archaeology. These theoretical questions, which will be returned to throughout the thesis, have been divided into two broad groups, which I have labelled 'Knowledge and History' and 'Knowledge and Perspective.'

Scope and aims of the thesis

Research questions

This project takes the representation of Babylon as a case study through which questions core to the production of knowledge about the past can be explored. The research questions below reflect this in two senses: first, they could productively be asked of almost any famous ancient site, and second, they are

significant both from the specific perspective of Babylon and from the wider perspective of archaeological theory. The questions are:

> How has the identity of ancient Babylon been negotiated and constructed in culture, particularly in modern European culture and in the development of archaeology?
>
> How do these processes of negotiation and construction relate to the history of archaeological thought, and to the changing roles of the past in modern identities and epistemologies?
>
> How and to what extent are the ideals and conflicts involved in the formation of early Mesopotamian archaeology still active in/relevant to present-day academic and non-academic discourse and archaeological practice?

These questions relate to the mechanics of archaeology and of the construction of knowledge within it – the understandings on which disciplinary norms and aims are based. To address them it is necessary to move beyond the normal range of sources and ideas associated with an archaeological understanding of the past. There will be opportunities in this thesis to demonstrate the extent to which archaeology, archaeological representation and archaeological knowledge are culturally constituted, unstable and open to influences other than those of historical or scientific argument, specifically the power of rhetorical and visual devices as well as (even over and above) logical or data-supported

academic arguments (Moser 1998, 2001). Equally relevant is the fact that in society as a whole the dominant voices in the construction of the past do not necessarily come from within the academic sphere at all. It is therefore necessary to consider ideas about Babylon from art and literature, from scripture and the classics, and as far as possible from the full range of sources available to and acting upon the thought of those who produced and consumed the earliest 'archaeological' representations of Babylon. One premise of the present thesis is that the history of archaeology is as much cultural history as history of science or biography, and this study will present possibilities and opportunities as well as challenges in this relatively neglected aspect of the history of the field. It certainly offers breadth: cultural historiography is inherently interdisciplinary (Emden 2003: 209), and the history of representation and of ideas crosses many boundaries. Breadth in source material allows the relationships between varied forms of knowledge and understanding to be examined, as will be shown throughout this thesis.

Roles of the history of archaeology

The intended outcome of this thesis is an analysis of contexts of production and consumption, and of the cultural paradigms that have shaped our understandings of and approaches to the Mesopotamian past. Historicising the representation of Babylon in European culture can render the processes of archaeological interpretation, past and present, more intelligible, allowing an assessment of the social, historical, political and cultural contexts that impact on our interpretation of the past today. It is no longer possible to claim that such a process can lead to genuine objectivity, yet even contained within "a polemic defence of the New

Archaeology and a programme of work he was never going to be able to carry out" (Champion 1991: 131), Clarke's (1973) original call for critically self-aware practice remains relevant today, as archaeologists begin to explore the potential of explicitly subjective personal interpretative approaches (Dowson 2000), multiple narratives (Hamilakis 1999; Olsen 2001; Shanks 1992) and the inclusion of non-specialist/non-archaeological interpretations of the past (cf. *World Archaeology* 34 (2), devoted to the theme of community archaeology (Marshall 2002); also the recent appearance and growing importance of two journals, *Public Archaeology* and the *Journal of Social Archaeology*). More than ever, a thorough understanding of how and why we construct our interpretations of the past is recognised as crucial to good interpretative practice and to the theoretical and methodological development of archaeology. In a positivist paradigm this was more peripheral – a question of eliminating bias. In a climate where most now consider knowledge to be in some sense situated and contingent, however, the question of how and why interpretations take a particular form is integral to the interpretative enterprise itself:

> Chroniclers today profess to be as soberly unbiased as possible. But the most objective and dispassionate histories need eloquence to be readable. 'Rhetoric is ordinarily deemed the icing on the cake of history', but in fact it is 'mixed right into the batter'.
>
> (Lowenthal 1995: 126)

"Eloquence" in this case is more than the use of an attractive style. To be readable, and to be accepted, writers must write for a readership, i.e. within a discourse. Their adherence to and/or deviation from the stylistic norms of the discourse are as meaningful as the data content or logic of their work, and in

some circumstances can even supplant the role of these other elements completely. Lowenthal cites the example of community identity:

> Heritage is seen as intensely personal to individuals and to communities; its ownership and control arouse possessive anxieties. But the very uniqueness of heritage to each claimant means we cannot persuade others to adopt our perspective. Failing rational reasoning, we fall back on rhetorical hyperbole. Finally, rhetoric reinforces our own sense of attachment, shoring up our conviction that we care about heritage as much as we claim to, and reassuring our fellows that we are at one on vital matters of identity. (Lowenthal 1995: 130)

Understanding the contexts of production and consumption is also key to making good use of, particularly, older work. Unless one finds the assumption or claim of objectivity in a publication wholly convincing, it is always necessary to situate that work historically in order to render it useful in the present. In the archaeology of Western Asia this requirement is ever-present: the large-scale excavations and national collecting sprees of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries still represent the foundations of the subject, but cannot be usefully understood or studied as present-day archaeological fieldwork. The ambitions and priorities of the excavators, their relationships with their host-countries, their methodologies, recording techniques/standards and their approaches to the interpretation and publication of the material they uncovered were radically different to those of present-day archaeologists studying the same areas or even working at the same sites. It is essential to understand these differences, in the process making explicit our own research

agendas, prejudices and priorities, if the research of the present is to effectively build on (or indeed productively deviate from or break with) that of the past.

Histories of archaeology as a genre have a common format: a progression of biographical segments forming a narrative structure in which knowledge is added to and refined over time. Often they employ exactly the kind of progress narrative that archaeologists have been identifying and questioning in the contexts of human evolution and the 'emergence of civilisation' for many years. The narrative appeal of the history of archaeology is readily apparent, and it is unsurprising that writers have tended to focus on telling an engaging, coherent story rather than entering into a theoretical discussion exploring the relationship of archaeology's history to its practice in the present (although two important exceptions must be noted in Bruce Trigger's *History of Archaeological Thought* (Trigger 1989) and Julian Thomas's *Archaeology and Modernity* (Thomas 2004)). One great strength of histories of archaeology has been an ability to reach readerships outside the discipline, as in the case of *A Hundred Years of Archaeology* (Daniel 1950), *Gods, Graves and Scholars* (Ceram 1967) or more recently the work of Paul Bahn (1996) and John Romer (2001). They can function as good introductions to archaeology, interesting to general readers as well as students, and the value of such public communication is not to be underestimated (McManamon 2000: 16). This is not the only role the history of archaeology can play, however; it should equally be able to inform archaeological theory, method and practice in the present (Trigger 1989: 4). Archaeologists working in Western Asia, for example, need an awareness of the colonial history of their field in order to understand the present-day structure of

their profession and to develop approaches in a way that is critically self-conscious in a sense perhaps broader than that intended by Clarke: relationships with national and local government, the structures, ethical policies and actions of museums, academic departments and professional and learned societies, employment practices and educational projects must all be subject to constant reflection and revision, informed by historical awareness.

Representation and non-academic sources

As stated above, this thesis deals with a range of sources and influences outside the normal scope of archaeology. Accordingly, different criteria are required when considering them. The value placed here on any distinction between academic and non-academic/scientific, mythological or fantastic approaches is based on relevance to the cultural production of this distinction in approaches to the Mesopotamian past, and not on the empirical merits of a given source as regarded by contemporary scholarship. Due to their broad cultural scope our research questions demand a relativistic approach to the definition of and value placed upon historical authenticity. Rather than set up criteria for the exclusion of representations from consideration, therefore, this thesis is extremely inclusive, and focuses on specific cases based on their historiographical interest or importance rather than relative accuracy: twentieth-century art is not excluded because of the advent of archaeological reconstructions, for example. Not only does this approach help to avoid the pitfall of writing a spurious progressive history of interpretation, culminating in and useful primarily for a very recent 'best' representation of Babylon – whose own very short shelf-life it would only serve to emphasise – but it also allows a study of the

historiographical relationship between forms of knowledge and understanding normally treated quite separately. The differences between the versions of Babylon presented by Herodotus, Rembrandt and Robert Koldewey reveal more than differences in the availability of information, and understanding the contexts in which representations are produced and consumed is a major concern of this project. Analysis will focus on the development of archaeological knowledge as a distinct and privileged epistemology in the case of Babylon, and on the continued influence of older traditions on this epistemology. The formation and development of the discipline of Mesopotamian archaeology and the factors influencing research agendas are both of interest in this respect.

Previous studies on archaeological representation

Philosophically an outgrowth of aesthetics but heavily influenced by the development of structuralist/post-structuralist thought, particularly the work of Barthes (1972) and Derrida (1981), and Foucault's discourse-based, historicizing approach (Foucault 1977, 1980), representation as a subject of academic study has extended in recent years throughout the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and is core to newer fields such as cultural and media studies (Hall 1997). In a climate favouring relativism, in which the early Marxist conception of a stable truth existing beyond ideology has been rejected in many branches of scholarly thought, the role of representation has come to play a more central role in the academic enterprise. In archaeology, the importance of communicating academic knowledge effectively has been further emphasised by the development of long-standing popular myths regarding

archaeology and archaeologists. The jokes surrounding such public misconceptions have fuelled a small industry in their own right (e.g. Bahn 1989), but their longevity and popularity have also caused serious concern where they promote models for the human past whose political connotations threaten rights and freedoms in the present. These problems have been most acutely felt in two areas of archaeology, where they have met with drastically different disciplinary reactions. The first, that of human evolution, has acknowledged and responded to the popular myths in an attempt to displace them, while the second, Egyptology, has generally been more intent on keeping so-called 'fringe' theories from gaining the academic credibility that might stem from serious scholarly engagement with them.

The popular and scholarly representation of human origins has received major critiques from two quarters. From the natural sciences Stephen Jay Gould devoted much of his later and popular writing to addressing public misconceptions surrounding evolution, human or otherwise, and to identifying the academic traditions – particularly visual – which reinforced these (Gould 1989). From the point of view of the humanities, the work of Stephanie Moser (1998, 2001) takes a historical perspective on the representation of human origins, demonstrating the historical development of contemporary iconographies for human origins. The two approaches have in common a concern with the close link between nineteenth-century models for human biological evolution and those for innate superiority in class, race and gender. They also share a preoccupation with the force and longevity of visual arguments, focussing on the resistance of iconographies to changes in academic

thought (e.g. Moser's (1992) discussion of the persistence of outdated reconstructions of Neanderthal posture; Champion's work on the iconography of the ancient Gaul (Champion 1997); Gould's (1989) demonstration of the recurrence of the 'Walk of Man' in popular culture). Both these critiques have generated further interest and research into the representation of human origins and prehistory, and have brought a high degree of political awareness to the field.

The very different reaction of Egyptologists and Egyptian archaeologists to the popular myths surrounding their work may in part be attributed to the fact that these 'fringe' ideas are typically less overtly political than those in human origins. Pyramid-building aliens and reanimated mummies are easier to laugh off than pseudo-scientific models of racial superiority. A reluctance to give the hugely popular theories of extraterrestrial involvement in the construction of the pyramids the oxygen of academic credibility has, however, long prevented an effective response to the writing of, principally, Eric von-Däniken (1969), whose huge sales are a concern for all archaeologists interested in forming a meaningful public discourse. What was once simply laughed at by archaeologists is increasingly recognised as a dangerous force in popular thought on ancient Egypt. Moreover, the portrait of innocent insanity or mere cynical exploitation of existing conspiracy theories traditionally given to such writers by respected archaeologists has given way to a realisation that such theories do carry with them their own unpleasant political baggage. Most importantly, the racist connotations of invoking extraterrestrial pyramid-builders have now achieved recognition. The implication that Africans could

not have built such wonders is reminiscent of the European discovery of Great Zimbabwe. The argument then was that very early, hitherto unknown European colonists had built the enormous walls. African construction, indicating 'advanced' culture in then-current European terms, would have affected white claims to the land, which were based on the idea that the African inhabitants were 'primitives' (Chennels 1995).

The role of Egypt's past in the present is a subject of increasing academic concern (Butler 2001; Hassan 1998; Roth 1998), and highly deserving of such attention. This suggests an increasing willingness to acknowledge and engage with and directly contest 'fringe' theories. Even with the best efforts of the archaeological community, however, the struggle to dispel certain popular myths about ancient Egypt will surely be a long and difficult one.

Within Mesopotamian archaeology the focus has been on the field's early history in the mid-nineteenth century. The important place occupied by the Assyrian discoveries of Austen Henry Layard and Paul-Emile Botta in most histories of archaeology has prompted significant interest in the reception of Assyrian antiquities in nineteenth-century Europe. Although primarily historical or biographical, the studies focussing on this reception have necessarily also discussed the representation and consumption of the Mesopotamian past. Art historian Frederick Bohrer has focussed on the reception of the Assyrian past as a European cultural phenomenon (Bohrer 1989, 1992, 1998), looking at the production and reception of *Nineveh and its Remains* (Layard 1849a) and its successors, the reception of the antiquities themselves in London and Paris, and

the cultural context of the discoveries. More recently he has produced a major comparative art-historical study of the reception of ancient Mesopotamia in England, France and Germany (Bohrer 2003). For the social and political context of the early Mesopotamian excavations Larsen provides a particularly thorough treatment (Larsen 1989a, 1996), and has also written on the 'Babel-Bibel' controversy discussed later in this document (Larsen 1995), important in this context in the sense that it made explicit many of the issues at stake in the representation of the Mesopotamian past in the early twentieth century. Some commentators, particularly Larsen (1989a, 1989b) and Bahrani (1998, 2001a), have focussed on the symbolic role of the Assyrian discoveries in reinforcing European imperial narratives of possession and inheritance, important themes in the history of European archaeology in the Middle East more generally. A 1998 conference in Berlin took Babylon as its theme and included several papers addressing its history of exploration and research traditions associated with its study (Renger 1999b). Two particularly important syntheses of the classical sources and travellers' accounts of Babylon are those of Hilprecht (1904: 12-22) and Rogers (1900: 1-45; 225-253). More recently Lundquist (1995) has written specifically on Babylon in later European sources, while Henrietta McCall (1998) has produced a book chapter charting accounts of Mesopotamia from late antiquity to the Victorian period. McCall has also curated two exhibitions directly relevant to this thesis: "I Am the Bull of Nineveh," Department of the Ancient Near East, British Museum, 2003 (McCall and Tubb 2003); and (with Irving Finkel) "The Price of Beauty: Edwin Long's Babylonian Marriage Market (1875)," Leighton House Museum, London, 2004 (Harrison 2004).

The recent and contemporary representation of the Mesopotamian past has received less attention. The material that does exist has consistently demonstrated that these issues are bound up with the political circumstances of the present, and that they can be used in understanding the cultural aspects of those circumstances (Baram 1991; Hamilakis 2003; Pollock 2003; Pollock and Lutz 1994; Seymour 2004). As will be shown in this thesis, protecting cultural heritage involves more than physical preservation and conservation. The representation of the past can have serious and lasting consequences within and beyond archaeology. It requires attention, more so at times of crisis and change.

The present thesis, then, benefits from a significant amount of earlier research on which to build. Babylon is not an obscure subject, and the attention already paid by Mesopotamian archaeologists in the twentieth century to the history of its exploration has made the attempt to treat this large corpus of material in terms of representation possible. Where that attempt departs from existing work is in the extent to which it must engage directly with aspects of the philosophy of science and epistemology, cultural studies and representation. The following sections will outline the implications of these debates for this research, beginning with questions of knowledge as historically situated and the role of representation in the history of science/knowledge, and moving on to questions of viewpoint: the perspectives from which representations of the past are consumed and, in particular, the implications of looking at Babylon from a standpoint that privileges non-Iraqi sources. The final section of this chapter will briefly address the relevance of deconstruction and the role of narrative to

this kind of study, which attempts to achieve results relevant to archaeologists through techniques more familiar in cultural and literary studies.

Knowledge, culture and historical process

The study of change and continuity: representation, historiography and the dynamics of cultural history

There is a history of Babylon with which this thesis is not directly concerned. The chronology of the city's existence, disappearance and rediscovery is of only secondary interest to the present thesis, its relevance lying in its bearing upon representations: pre- and post- the life of Babylon as an extant city; pre- and post- the German excavations at Babylon. Yet in its own way representation research is essentially historical. To avoid confusion between what is of primary and secondary relevance to the thesis it is necessary to clarify at the outset exactly the kind of history that is of most relevance to the study of Babylon's representation.

In its subject matter, the study of representation is cultural history: we know that we will be dealing with the lives of words and images rather than directly with a sequence of political events or a set of broad social changes. Unlike 'true' cultural history, however, research focused on representation does not take this material as an end in itself. Instead it uses the study of words and images as a basis from which to approach the political events and social changes they accompany. The result is cultural history in form, social and political history in purpose. The advantages of this approach lie in the particular

kind of history on which it allows us to focus, and in particular on a critical but poorly understood disjunction between the different kinds of change and continuity observable in cultural, social and political history respectively. In practice this difference occurs along a continuum, but it is best explained in terms of simplified extremes. On the one hand, one might construct a history composed only of political 'events' – stereotyped 'kings and battles' history. This history favours the concrete and quantifiable, and as a result a model favouring the identification of change that is relatively abrupt against a background of continuity that is assumed. On the other, it is possible to take a particularly insular approach to the history of art, concerned with the development of styles and techniques to the exclusion of any political background. This second approach is tuned primarily to identify incremental and gradual change, and is better equipped to theorise and contextualize this than the sudden and dramatic shifts so often linked to the political world, but at the same time it is frustratingly detached from that world and by extension from having meaning outside its own relatively modest focus. Chronology, geography and socio-political matters are at best tangential to this kind of history, and it in return is poorly equipped to produce knowledge of relevance to them.

Even given this artificially stark contrast we can see that there are always multiple patterns of change and continuity operating simultaneously, and that they interrelate. A study that deliberately approaches the political via the cultural (as opposed to simply providing some political background to a cultural history, or vice versa) has the advantage of dealing directly with this

disjunction, and is thus unusually well positioned to discuss the significance of continuity amid great change, and of change amid continuity. The existence and importance of these distinctions have been well expressed in the context of literary history by Northrop Frye:

> When I first became interested in problems of literary history, I became very impatient with the kind of literary history that told me nothing about the history of literature, but was simply ordinary history specializing in the names and dates of authors. Genuinely literary history, I thought, was largely concerned with conventions and genres, and as I looked further into it, it began to take on two aspects, one diachronic, the other synchronic. Diachronically, it showed a kind of Darwinian pattern, throwing mutations out more or less at random and descending through whatever had the greatest survival value... Yet every modulation in convention seemed to throw up much the same pattern as before, so that the genres of comedy and romance, for example, maintained an extraordinary similarity through all the centuries of social change.
>
> (Frye 1981: 219)

While I do not necessarily agree with Frye's Darwinian analogy regarding short-term change, the argument that multiple processes operate simultaneously and at different speeds, and that apparent radicalism may mask great long-term conservatism, is very much in line with the precepts of this thesis. Similarly, the idea that literary, or in the case of this project cultural, history should properly concentrate primarily on the content of the works under study, with biography relevant only because it bears on that work, is also the broad position taken here. This thesis analyses the mechanics of the history of archaeology, and aims to offer new insight on the generation of archaeological knowledge itself. If this sounds ambitious it is not without precedent: Moser's *Ancestral Images* (Moser

1998) and Jahoda's *Images of Savages* (Jahoda 1999) successfully demonstrated continuity in the representation and understanding of early humans and the concept of the primitive even amid the greatest changes to accepted models of human origins in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Ancestral Images*, especially, highlighted the gulf between the unstable detail of current scientific thought and the remarkably stable basic image of a 'primitive' human. It was able to do so precisely because it approached its subject matter through sources that were *not* seen to be driving development or as core to the subject. Approaching the history of Mesopotamian archaeology via the cultural milieu within which it developed holds the same potential for identifying such disjunctions, and thus of helping us better understand the processes through which the field actually develops and changes – the ways in which ideas, epistemologies and knowledge itself are created, enshrined, modified and destroyed. This is the history the study of representation can offer, and it more than justifies its indirect approach. At its best it is history at the heart of archaeological theory, and of our disciplinary self-knowledge.

At a broader level, the particular role of cultural explanations in the history of science has long been a matter of contention. Since the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1970 (1962)), the history of science has moved away from interpretations based on technical innovation and individual brilliance as driving forces in themselves, toward explanations based on political, economic, social and cultural factors. In the arts and humanities *The Order of Things* (Foucault 1970) has had a comparable effect, leading to the rise of many more-or-less Foucaultdian approaches to the analysis

of disciplinary structures and discourse. This project is itself a product of the more culturally oriented paradigm, but nonetheless allows an exploration of the value of cultural determinism in disciplinary histories. By looking at the extent to which external ideas and influences shape the archaeological approach to Babylon, it should equally be possible to highlight those instances where internal factors (e.g. technical improvements in method; cases where the disciplinary culture of archaeology departs substantially from the 'mainstream;' the influences and constraints exerted by excavated material and deciphered texts within a given interpretative paradigm) are of greater importance. It should be noted, however, that the binarism of any given case is artificial, e.g. a technical development within archaeology is normally related to similar technical development outside the subject, and this in turn to economic, social and political factors that may to a greater or lesser extent have driven the development, while the judgment that the development represents an improvement, or is methodologically valid, is also dependent on contemporary value systems rather than any absolute.

Epistemology and memory

It is essential to this thesis that knowledge is treated as historically situated and contingent, and the transitions and transformations in understandings and representations of Babylon go a long way toward supporting this treatment. A historicizing approach to knowledge, however, raises important questions about relativism and about the particular validity and value of contemporary archaeological knowledge. As in other fields, twentieth-century processes of upheaval and removal of old orders, coupled with democratisation in politics

and education, have left professional authority increasingly open to external questioning:

> Everywhere the foundations of expert knowledge are being undermined and this reflects a... general crisis in the relationship between intellectuals and society in the late twentieth century... At the most fundamental level, it is the claim to science (loosely defined here as an externally validated system of knowledge) that is doubted, coinciding with movements in different disciplines to subvert the traditional division between the thinking subject and passive social object, and replace it with a more engaged and equal relationship.
>
> (Rowlands 1994: 129)

It is worthwhile, therefore, to look closely at the implications of the changes we have seen in terms of the debate on knowledge-creation and value. 'Knowledge' for the purposes of this discussion is epistemologically broad, working from the starting point that the definition of knowledge probably involves a truth-claim that is valid in some way. Philosophical consensus beyond this point is minimal, but for the purposes of this discussion not vitally important: what matters is to establish a framework sufficiently broad and flexible to accommodate considerable historical change. The criteria for truth when studying knowledge historically do not have to be narrow or stringent. Just the reverse: what the authors of our sources considered to constitute truth is of great relevance, and our analysis must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate them. It is important to remember that we are discussing epistemology, whereas to look at the absolute validity of truth-claims is to enter into metaphysics. For convenience, we can take a working definition of knowledge from Lehrer, who argues that

knowledge has a truth condition (because if one is wrong one does not know), an acceptance condition (one has to accept any claim, including one's own, as true in order to know it) and a justification condition (one must have some reason or evidence for one's belief: a lucky guess is not knowledge) (Lehrer 1990: 10-12).

The first step here is to differentiate between different bases for knowledge, and hence between fundamentally different types of knowledge. There are many ways in which this can be done. In a recent introduction to epistemology Audi differentiates principally between scientific, moral and religious knowledge (Audi 1998: 250), but the project of making such distinctions is an old one. Giustiniani (1985: 167) cites an attempt to differentiate between different aspects of the soul in Plato's *Republic*, in which it is suggested that that the rational and emotional aspects of thought,

> ...are two and different from one another, naming that in the soul whereby it reckons and reasons the rational [2] and that with which it loves, hungers, thirsts, and feels the flutter [3] and titillation of other desires, the irrational and appetitive – companion [4] of various repelations and pleasures.
>
> (*Republic* 439d: 1-4)

This seems to me to be a binary division, a reading which agrees with those of Penner (1992: 129) and Williams (1973: 169; 1997: 58), but Giustiniani reads it as tripartite, consisting of "the rational soul, the emotional soul, the appetitive soul" (Giustiniani 1985: 167). Both the binary and the tripartite divisions, however, have their own merits as interpretative tools, as does the modern

tripartite division outlined by Audi. A psychologist might argue that all of these distinctions oversimplify and artificially compartmentalize, but the important point is that such distinctions need to be treated as tools or lenses of the interpreter, in which respect they are of enormous use in highlighting and isolating different patterns of logic, association and belief, and not as full-blown, even complete, models of human cognition, which they are plainly not. As lenses these models are not mutually exclusive, and the emphasis should not therefore lie on finding a single perfect distinction – it is unlikely to exist – but on tools fit-to-purpose for understanding a given process. The distinctions I outline below, therefore, are those I see as most relevant to historiographic treatment of the relationships between sources in this thesis. Others are possible, and any broader applications would be dependent on the nature both of the data being studied and of the research questions being asked.

In the case of Babylon the first, perhaps historically the most important, form of knowledge that is apparent is knowledge based on the authority of the Bible as revelation, as infallible and as literal truth: *theocratic* knowledge. In the case of the present thesis theocratic knowledge primarily refers to uses of biblical texts, but the definition is of course broader than this, and can even be argued to include the use of ostensibly non-religious texts as infallible authorities (as in political personality cults). A second form of knowledge to be considered is that which is grounded in allegory, that uses Babylon in moral or anecdotal rather than historical ways, and which, though often recounting or representing biblical material, does not depend for its message on the literal truth of that material. This is the seemingly paradoxical category of *mythic* knowledge. It is

not necessarily appropriate to talk of myth as knowledge as such, and this thesis will more commonly discuss representation in terms of ideas. As will be demonstrated, however, the history of Babylon as idea has involved great permeation of the mythic into the known, and the interaction of knowledge (however defined) with the mythic is such as to suggest that myth can function as knowledge within the history of ideas (see particularly Chapter 5, Chapter 8). Crucially, the mythic includes moral knowledge embodied in allegory. The argument for its value as knowledge in this sense is encapsulated in Aristotle's contention (*Poetics* 9) that poetry is superior to history because it deals with the universal and with meaning where history can deal only with the particular (Finley 1975 (1971): 11). Vico made such 'poetic wisdom' a precursor and substitute for historical knowledge (Levin 1966: 23): both, for Vico, encapsulated their own forms of philosophy and of science:

> The first nations, says Vico, thought in poetic characters, spoke in fables, and wrote in hieroglyphics; taking external things or acts for signs. Poetic or mythological thought, thus described in general terms, he proceeds to treat under the successive heads of poetic metaphysics, logic, morals, economics, politics, physics, cosmography, astronomy, chronology and geography.
>
> (Whittaker 1926: 204)

The notion of the historical (and/or rational-empirical) supplanting the poetic in so many areas of thought is an intriguing one, but perhaps not as promising as that of their coexistence and interaction in all these areas. In terms of cultural history and representation, the question is not so much one of value as of

practical influence: how, in practice, is the mythic used as knowledge, and how does it relate to or interact with other forms of knowledge?

The next category, *humanistic* knowledge, covers several distinct bases for knowledge or truth-claims, whose shared feature is a grounding of knowledge in the human, whether in cognition or sensory perception. The most influential starting points for this anchoring in the human are those of Descartes (I think, therefore I am) and Vico (we can know only what we have made) (Avis 1986: 137). In practical terms at least, some form of humanism has underpinned the vast bulk of work in the 'humanistic' disciplines. Finally there is *positivistic* knowledge, whose basis is a physical universe whose properties can be measured in absolute (objective) terms and, in a pure positivism, without reference to the human except as object of study. In archaeology weaker forms of this are found in the New Archaeology and processualism. Most present-day archaeological research, and indeed scientific research generally, operates through a hybrid, whereby in practical terms knowledge is treated as positive and the sensory perception underpinning it as accurate (Audi 1998: 250), but in philosophical terms limitations of positivistic knowledge as existing within humanistic knowledge are broadly accepted. This hybrid position is at least in part a consequence of the rise of atheism and the removal of God as an anchoring point for the human and by extension for humanistic knowledge. In the absence of God the humanist cannot be studying the world as revealed by Providence, nor can reason or the senses be trusted as accurate through the will of a divine Creator. To this extent the basis of humanistic knowledge becomes arbitrary, and speculation that this arbitrariness can be escaped and a more

absolute knowledge obtained ceases to appear blasphemous and futile and starts to seem essential and possible. *Empirical* knowledge, derived from observation and experiment, can be humanist or positivist in character because both forms of knowledge allow for hypothesis testing of a kind that is impossible for mythic knowledge and antithetical to theocratic knowledge. This ability to test is the basis on which the authority of academic research is most commonly validated: authority stems principally from the conception that the researcher tests claims according to reason and rational thought (Shanks 1992: 16). The high value placed on these principles originates in the Enlightenment, with Francis Bacon in the case of empiricism and with Descartes in that of rationalism. Despite their history of use in combination, however, the positions of Bacon and Descartes are not particularly compatible: Bacon put a faith in sensory data (Bacon 1996 (1605): 32) that Descartes shunned, the latter arguing that only the mind and the capacity to reason are secure, and therefore favouring an inductive progression from abstract geometry, mathematics and logic to knowledge of the particular, as opposed to experiment and physical measurement of properties (Thomas 2004: 16-18). His belief in rational thought as the ideal basis for knowledge was strong enough to constitute its own form of positivism, an inward-looking metaphysical counterpart to the late-modern theories that have tried to achieve the same through the physical world:

> The long chains of simple and easy reasoning by means of which geometers are accustomed to reach the conclusions of their most difficult demonstrations, had led me to imagine that all things, to the knowledge of which man is competent, are mutually connected in the same way, and that there is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it, provided only we abstain

> from accepting the false from the true, and always preserve in our thoughts the order necessary for the deduction of one truth from another.
>
> (Descartes 1996 (1637): 47)

Although he agrees with Descartes in placing the world of the human mind (which, for both, constitutes the metaphysical), closest to God, expressing the relationships of knowledge visually in his frontispiece to the *New Science* (Vico 1999 (1744): 1; Fig. 2.1), Vico's position in this respect is closer to that of Bacon. The new science in question was that of the philosophy of history – the study of what we have made, which for Vico defined the limits of possible human knowledge – and therefore the primary science from which philosophy is derived (Herrera 2001: 77-78). What our continued faith in the combination of these thinkers' positions tends to ignore is the ultimate reliance of both positions on God. Both Descartes and Bacon require a higher guarantor, of the accuracy of the senses and of the human mind respectively. Vico's position does not escape the problem: for the sensory to rest on the rational and vice-versa would simply be circularity.

Of course, the problem occurs not for Bacon, Descartes or Vico themselves, but for the later thinkers inheriting their epistemologies. The removal of God as a guarantor makes room for positivism, or more properly creates a vacuum that positivism has thus far been the epistemology most successful in filling. That success, it should be stressed, has been more in practical than in philosophical terms. The ability to make accurate predictions through rational and empirical knowledge of the character of physical law is not more than this and the problem of ultimate verification and validation that Descartes saw in Bacon

remains. We have arrived, of necessity, back at humanism, and are still in need of an ultimate guarantor. This problem being a lasting one, the relative merits of practical and partial guarantors actually in use become important to our analysis. We have already looked briefly at positivism, whose problems for archaeology have already been the subject of much discussion. A second practical basis for humanist knowledge in current use is democracy. This basis is not an epistemology or form of knowledge in itself, but rather a mechanism for sanctioning epistemologies. Its role is rarely discussed explicitly, however, and deserves attention here.

Democracy and empiricism in archaeological knowledge

Archaeology is valued as a means of learning about the past for the way it produces knowledge as well as for the specific knowledge it produces. Because it is an empirical approach to the past, archaeology is or should be open to constant revision and inherently anti-dogmatic. It is essentially democratic insofar as the validity of arguments should in theory be based on quality of method rather than personal authority, and that all arguments are open to empirical questioning. The leap from this academic democracy to a meaningfully discursive public archaeology is enormous, yet the two are closely linked, and are important for the same reasons.

In a humanist framework consensus on a particular historical fact is not particuarly important – when we work from a broadly agreed empirical basis one person can be right and everyone else wrong. Consensus on epistemology is important, however, since this is necessary in order to evaluate all claims to

knowledge and truth. Once we have made this distinction it rapidly becomes apparent that challenges to the basic epistemologies underpinning contemporary archaeological method and interpretation are rare in the public sphere, coming more commonly from academic discourse. The pseudo-archaeology and wild theories that so frustrate archaeologists are more often challenges to consensus on historical fact within a broadly agreed epistemology and can legitimately be criticized as such without insult to anyone's values or worldview. This agreement in epistemology is crucial to avoiding what Foucault calls the crisis of *parrhesia* (the classical Greek term for 'free speech,' carrying, according to Foucault, connotations of frankness, truth-telling, and the courage to anger one's interlocutor):

> [T]he crisis regarding *parrhesia* is a problem of truth: for the problem is one of recognizing who is capable of speaking the truth within the limits of an institutional system where everyone is equally entitled to give his own opinion. Democracy by itself is not able to determine who has the specific qualities which enable him to speak the truth (and thus should possess the right to tell the truth). And *parrhesia*, as a verbal activity, as pure frankness in speaking, is also not sufficient to disclose truth since negative *parrhesia*, ignorant outspokenness, can also result.
>
> (Foucault 2001: 73)

Where epistemology is challenged, however, with religious beliefs being the most important example, it is the appreciation of a difference between the mythical or theocratic and the empirical bases for knowledge that allows the archaeologist to operate legitimately. Different criteria for knowledge have to exist here, but this co-existence has been cultivated successfully for several

centuries and is in no danger of destroying either the empirical basis of scientific knowledge or the moral basis of religious knowledge, provided fundamentalist versions of either position remain the preserve of small minorities. Effective democracy acts as a control and a release valve for these extremes, and their existence, for all the problems it creates, is a proof of freedom. The degree to which archaeologists' professional authority is democratically produced is a measure of the discipline's success as a humanist endeavour. The democracy of memory in archaeology is increased by the kind of public education that helps people understand the empirical basis of archaeological knowledge and its limitations, and that empowers people to ask questions and contribute views at a meaningful level. This is more likely to be at the level of mythic or narrative meaning, in interpretation than in empirically grounded technical detail, since the specialist skills required of the latter often make it very exclusive. The reliance of this relationship on non-specialists for its success highlights the importance of representation, particularly when we consider the processes through which questions at the level of 'meaning' (in the sense of interpretation, narrativisation, moralisation) are addressed:

> [F]or [Walter] Benjamin and [Aby] Warburg, historical meaning is the product of a rather symbolic process. In the same way as the past does not survive in facts but only in symbols and within our own historical imagination, any interpretation of the past has to rely on symbolic forms. Our conceptions of tradition, heritage and history, they would argue, are above all symbolic constellations of meaning. But it should be clear that this unconscious presence of the past needs interpretation; it needs, in other words, an imaginary reconstruction.
>
> (Emden 2003: 223)

Such reliance on symbolic forms seems to me to be increased where the treatment of a subject is relatively summary, as in public or popular archaeology. The forms that public archaeology and popular representations of the past take, therefore, are directly connected to the underpinning of archaeology's academic validity and public usefulness.

As a discipline requiring specialist expertise for data collection and analysis archaeology is exclusive. Although validity of interpretation is not supposed to be based on authority as such, the requirement for a certain kind of expertise produces a similar (though far preferable) effect. Archaeology privileges and protects the empirical: the scope for plurality in interpretation comes through the ambiguities of empirical research, not through significant challenges to its value as a core process. This privilege can lead to the reduction of archaeology to classification or functionalism, however, and to the idea that there is a stable pre-interpretation core not only of method but also of data. The responsibility of empirical researchers in archaeology (in practice most if not all archaeologists) is to make that specialist knowledge useful to a wider mythos debate, i.e. to make it possible for archaeology to inform public understanding and debate over questions of identity and heritage, and through education to aim to make it possible for non-archaeologists to contribute meaningfully to these debates.

In terms of external challenges to the authority of expert knowledge of this kind the critical distinction is that between holding a different view that is still grounded in a basically empirical epistemology (e.g. if the only archaeology

book one has read presents apparently compelling evidence for pyramid-building aliens) and holding a different view stemming from a different epistemology (e.g. folklore and a community's myths of origin or even historical fiction, where the measures of value and truth are rarely empirical – they are more likely to be what we would call a truth of mythos or mythic knowledge). The place of scripture being used as empirical evidence, as in creationism, is ambiguous here. As long as scripture is treated as the infallible and literal word of God its history is theocratic and only theocratic because divinity itself is not open to empirical testing or to interpretation as allegorical, hence mythic; on the other hand if it is treated more prosaically as a particularly credible historical source, or as a divinely inspired text whose interpretation is human and therefore questionable, it can be known in humanistic terms because it would then be subject to questioning as such. This difference to a large extent defines the nature and scope of any response: epistemology is a matter of human cultural and intellectual rights and therefore subject to the same principles of respect and mutual tolerance as all cultural and religious difference, whereas anything claiming an empirical basis is open to critique on empirical terms.

There is a slight but important distinction to be made between observation and description here. If we accept that all description (although not necessarily the observation on which that description is based) is human and subjective, there are only three ways to build knowledge, memory or values in common: democratic, mythic and theocratic. Democratic knowledge is unique among these in that it requires and is not undermined by scepticism and constant

questioning. A rejection of pure positivism and acknowledgement of inescapable subjectivity in description does not automatically imply the same acceptance in observation, although clearly the arguments are related.

The cost of democracy is an apparent inability to combat extreme or harmful interpretations of the past. This is not the case in practice – as a mechanism democracy is a relatively effective barrier to extremism and dogma – but it does require that one win the argument in the public sphere as well as in academe. This is apparently a problem for archaeologists, who cannot offer the fantastic conclusions some people desire, and pandering to populism does not constitute winning the argument. The solution is education, but again this cannot be dogmatic or even too didactic if it is to work – people must be able to see the argument as well as the conclusion if academic authority is to maintain a democratic basis. Beyond this, however, the distinction between disagreements of fact and disagreements of epistemology still matters in terms of allowing, or more accurately demanding, a strong academic reaction against pseudo-science: academics have a responsibility to the public that treats them as authorities to win the public argument on pyramid-building aliens, but it is winning the empirical academic argument that makes them right in the first place. Moreover, that empirical argument will in practice happen predominantly out of the public gaze. Only those directly involved, and indeed possessed of specialist knowledge and expertise, are able to follow the full and detailed discourse underpinning archaeological interpretation, and that only in cases close to their own specialisation. This mechanical, rather than philosophical, limitation seems to me to be the problem with the idea of democratic relativism associated with

Paul Feyerabend, and the goal of "a free society in which all traditions are given equal rights, equal access to education and other positions of power" (Feyerabend 1978: 30). To promote equality of access to education and power is entirely laudable. To put all forms of knowledge on an equal footing to be judged and selected from by the individual is also a legitimate goal, but it is a goal whose achievement requires not, as Feyerabend suggests, the removal of science's state and institutional privileges, but rather education of a quality and depth that allow the individual to make such judgements and selections consciously and knowledgeably.

Democratic relativism is, perhaps ironically, easiest to implement within the academy itself. Feyerabend rightly argued that in practice scientists' approaches to scientific problems are highly individual and subjective, and are not necessarily rational in the strict sense (Denning 2000: 248; cf. on serendipity, Chapter 7, this thesis). This ability to work on occasion in ways that do not fit strict rational-critical rules, however, is a product of acute awareness of those rules and their limitations. Again, it is education that makes this freedom and flexibility possible. The implementation of such democratic relativism in society, therefore, must either be a more limited and mitigated affair, or involve the very complex education described by Holtorf:

> Taking Feyerabend seriously would mean, for example, educating the next generation of citizens in their school and university education equally in all the main traditions of appreciating the past. There is no reason why archaeology education for students should be restricted to the results of academic archaeology, and not also encompass the

> basics of earth mysteries, modern druidism, treasure hunting with metal detectors or the involvement of extra-terrestrials.
>
> (Holtorf 2000: 245)

The same would apply to all sciences, and would be essential for an ideal democratic relativism. To repeat, the goal of facilitating such informed choice for all is a very good one, but its complete realisation is a near-impossibility. A great deal, then, must be taken on the strength of our belief in experts as experts. The functional democratic process in practice is that which makes the decisions on the authority of experts in the first place, much as democracy in politics operates in practice as democratic sanction of decision-makers more than individual decisions. It is a process with limitations: it is inherently conservative, and in general favours the academic and the expert. It is still far more arbitrary than an ideal positivism, or than a humanism grounded in religion – its grounding in the human is much more arbitrary than that of Descartes. It is subject to political abuse, not only potentially but in recent history and to extremes. Against all of this, however, can be weighed several advantages, the most important being that this form of humanistic basis rests on consensus and is therefore, if contingent, contingent upon society as a whole and not only the individual researcher. By extension it is also, in principle at least, contingent upon society's needs and interests. We can reasonably expect our research and knowledge to be the product of its time and place to the same extent as any of the sources covered in this thesis, but once this is understood the advantages of contingent and situated knowledge become clear: we answer questions that we consider important, in the ways that we see them framed, and on the basis of our particular epistemological positions, thus creating knowledge

that is meaningful and valuable, if limited to an epistemological context and not necessarily permanent. This process, rather than humanistic knowledge itself, is or can be cumulative. The ability to understand the perspectives of earlier historians and to understand our own perspectives as historically situated gives us the ability to at least conceive of a greater breadth in knowledge and understanding, if not actually to subscribe to several epistemologies or interpretations simultaneously. It allows us to understand that our own historically situated discourse is never finished, never complete, and is constantly being remade, a threat which poses its greatest threats not to empirical knowledge (though perhaps to claims that this knowledge is positive) but to received wisdom and dogma, through the value it places on continuous questioning and criticism (Said 2004: 47).

Democratic legitimation of expert knowledge is not the same as Said's ideal of democratic criticism. The latter is a more ambitious assertion that humanist criticism could be – should be – at once broader and more inclusive and more rigorously critical than in current discourse. Said addresses,

> ...the frequent but not always admitted connection between humanism as an attitude or practice that is often associated with very selective elites, be they religious, aristocratic, or educational, on the one hand, and, on the other, with an attitude of stern opposition, sometimes stated, sometimes not, to the idea that humanism might or could be a democratic process producing a critical and progressively freer mind"
>
> (Said 2004: 16)

The idea of a democratic process in criticism is an attractive one, and notwithstanding Foucault's crisis of *parrhesia* it has real epistemological merit. What Said argues for is not an abandonment of critical rigour as a valued quality but a conscious and active broadening of the critical franchise. Limiting itself to humanist education, Said's democratic criticism is more viable than the democratic relativism of Feyerabend, but Harold Bloom's scepticism of such a project is nonetheless understandable. He argues that such complete engagement is a hopeless cause:

> Cultural criticism is another dismal social science, but literary criticism, as an art, always was and always will be an elitist phenomenon. It was a mistake to believe that literary criticism could become a basis for democratic education or for societal improvement.
>
> (Bloom 1995 (1994): 17)

The difficulty is real (though not so great if one does not share Bloom's disdain for cultural criticism), but does not negate the worth of the goal. In terms of my proposition that humanist knowledge is in practice democratically sanctioned and regulated, the extension of the critical franchise Said advocates would represent the most convincing means of strengthening the basis of humanistic knowledge in the absence of God. Freedom of speech is of course a valid goal in its own right, but since it is also the core of democracy the two aims are entangled. Although not synonymous, they can in some respects be seen as the personal and collective understandings of the same phenomena: free speech is an individual right and an individual good, whose benefits are felt by the individual. Democracy in the most basic sense of plural free speech is perceived

as a collective good, whose benefits are felt by society at large. The same could be said with reference to a community of scholarship: inclusion confers benefits on the individual, inclusiveness on the scope and relevance of discourse.

Questions of identity and perspective

Representation between self and other

> Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. A symptom that precisely turns "we" into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible, the foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities.
>
> (Kristeva 1991: 1)

Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (*Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (Kristeva 1991 (1988)) is, among other achievements, probably the most sustained and successful application of Derridean difference theory to the politics of personal identity and to the understanding of self and other. In this sense it is one of the key links between the linguistic and psychoanalytic theory of European philosophy's long-running discourse on personhood and the more recent rise of questions regarding our perceptions of one another/others/Others. From the perspective of its concern with identity, however, the entire project is continuity, and *Strangers to Ourselves* covers discussions of identity from throughout the history of European philosophy, from St Paul to Montesquieu

and from Aeschylus to Thomas More. It is no accident that in approaching her subject matter Kristeva takes a historical perspective; foreignness is shown as historically contingent, and as an important part of the understanding of self. As the quote above suggests, to stop perceiving foreignness is also to negate any less than global meaning of 'we.' Kristeva thus frames the representation of an outside and of outsiders as an internal need, something generated within the self and necessary to the identification of the self.

Why expend so much effort on the representation of others and otherness? The question is never far away when looking at the European representation of Babylon. Kristeva's answer, although it is surely intended as partial and certainly not as definitive, raises a vitally important point: the irreducible problem in eclipsing foreignness lies with the meaning of 'we.' Not 'I,' but we. 'I' can be different, must be different. Personal identity means identification with the unique characteristics of oneself within a given 'we.' Group identity is a matter of identification with others, but it needs a further group with whom one does not identify to become meaningful. 'We are human' is a statement made possible by the existence of the non-human from which to differentiate ourselves. Any smaller grouping requires the existence of a human other. Perhaps it is reasonable to expect, therefore, that crisis and conflict in the representation of others will be played out at a public, communal level, in the assertion of communal identity. Asserting the identity of one's group affiliations is very different to asserting the identity of oneself within that group: personal identity can exist even if suppressed, whereas communal identity demands some form of externalisation – it has an absolute need for

representation. This is not to say that the two are mutually exclusive, but in the representation of otherness/foreignness the primary distinction must be that between other and self – individuation within either group, but particularly the other, must be secondary. The singular is necessarily subsumed, and individuals are quickly reduced to types or epitomes. This reduction is not simply a flaw in particular attempts to describe what is foreign, but part of the purpose and process of that description. Babylon is a great other in European culture, and frequently a site for the discourse of 'we' and 'they.' The intriguing question, which this thesis partially explores, is whether it also acts as something more than this, or other.

The focus and scope of representation research in archaeology

Two of the most common relationships archaeologists can hold with past material culture are self-referential: a reflected self mistaken for an other, or an other understand only in terms of self. Positivist empiricism has long been seen as a safeguard against these traps. It is still often asserted that one part of archaeology's right to authority in representing the past derives from the fact that it deals with the real physical remains of that past, rather than with partisan textual sources, garbled myths or superstition. The problem with this argument is that it relies on the belief that material culture is unmediated, that it speaks for itself. Very few archaeologists actually believe this, but it is common to think of the archaeologist as a minimal distortion in the transmission of information from past to present. Minimal or otherwise, 'distortion' is the wrong term. It misleads because it implies a process that can be purified, an ideal situation in which the introduction of human bias can be progressively reduced toward,

even if it never quite reaches zero. This is the positivist belief that fuelled processualism and the New Archaeology. The model is similar to the concepts of 'objective reporting' and 'bias' in news, themselves much discredited as ways accurately to describe the processes at work in news media.

If most archaeological research is the attempt to surmount these difficulties, and to ensure that the multiple lenses through which the past is studied archaeologically (Matthews 2003a: 38-47) are not simply mirrors, the study of representation in archaeology is the study of the lenses themselves. By focusing on the production and consumption of identities for the past in the present we can gain a clearer understanding of the processes that separate a lived past from a present day understanding of it. This is not the same as being able to recognize and strip away bias – ultimately, that 'bias' is archaeology, history, our interest in the past and our existence as human beings; attempts to purge it completely quickly become farcical. To deny these factors their existence is to strip away our very means of 'knowing' at all, as has been discussed above. What the study of representation can produce, however, is a clearer understanding of why we understand the past in the way that we do. The value of this does not help to produce a definitive account of the past – it could even be said to be antithetical to that goal – but is really about self-awareness. We understand, interpret and study the past in ways that are meaningful and useful to us. The more aware we are of this, however, the more scope there is to understand ourselves, our own interests and reasons for looking at the past, and our place in the historical variety of understandings and epistemologies of which human thought and knowledge are made.

The city lived and the city observed

The idea of studying or representing the identity of a city as a whole is problematic. How can the lives and experiences of thousands of people be collapsed into a single, discrete, coherent identity? There exists a commonly understood shorthand, a collection of images and feelings conjured up by the names of famous cities: imagine London, New York, Tokyo; imagine Babylon. One can, instantly, and it is this imagined Babylon, in its many forms, with which this thesis is primarily concerned. What needs to be clarified, then, is the process of abstraction that makes such imagining possible. This is a theme that has been treated by Michel de Certeau, whose *Walking in the City* worked to demonstrate the distance that can exist between the spectator's view and the lived experience of the city. De Certeau begins his self-consciously personal and even poetic account of New York City from the top of the World Trade Centre, looking down:

> To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Centre is to be lifted out of the city's grasp... When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before ones eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.
>
> (De Certeau 1999 (1984): 127)

The problem is a familiar one to anthropologists and archaeologists. Maps, plans, large-scale economic overviews, awareness of processes yet to take place; all of these help the interpreter to explain the phenomena they observe, yet distance them from the specifics of the world they aim to understand as observed phenomena are swallowed into larger patterns and processes. De Certeau goes on to contrast this experience with that of the "ordinary practitioners:"

> They walk - an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner,* whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings create a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.
>
> (De Certeau 1999 (1984): 128)

This latter experience of the city is far less accessible for archaeologists, as for anyone looking at the past. When considering an ancient city, the "blindness" de Certeau describes is hard to imagine. The effect of the overview is not easily reversed in any case, and for those looking at an ancient city the lived experience of the particular is not available. We are unable to walk in the living city of Babylon, and too familiar with the distanced view, de Certeau's "solar Eye." This frustrates the archaeologist. In attempting to know and understand

the past, walking in Babylon seems to be precisely the aim. The attempt to do so and yet to understand the whole raises another difficult question: how can a city be collapsed into a single identity? The depressing answer is that the role of the high vantage point is even greater than it might first appear. We create the particular based on our preconception of the whole, and the result is both coherent and artificial; further, its coherence is the most important, albeit counterintuitive, clue to its artifice. This is a characteristic of representation familiar from other fields: a key element of Said's argument in *Orientalism* (1978) was that the wealth of detail in representations of the Orient served to give credence and authority to often fantastic central themes, or to materialize the ability of the Orientalist to know the Orient, the matrix of detail feeding back into the whole, supporting and giving coherence to its subject such that "every discrete study of one bit of oriental material would also confirm in a summary way the profound Orientality of the material" (Said 1978: 255). The idea of the archaeologist's inability to fully experience the past at ground level takes this argument further: if our attempts to reconstruct the past at the particular level are so affected by our overview, it is inevitable that we will project this macro-level understanding onto the micro-level of everyday life and particular detail. Thus, it is the easiest, most natural process to reduce the "manifold story" of the city to a "legible text," to collapse the city lived until it becomes merely a microcosm of the city observed. This is what allows us to study the cultural identity of Babylon as a whole, and to discuss Nebuchadnezzar, Marduk, Semiramis, Ishtar, Belshazzar and the rest as parts of that whole, rather than as independent subjective personal identities. Looking at many representations of and ideas about Babylon, we will quickly discover a

remarkable coherence. This coherence is important: it should act as a reminder that whether the source is a map or a portrait there is every likelihood that we are still watching a city from above; we are not walking in Babylon.

European focus

Why, in a world struggling to redress the cultural imbalances of colonialism and imperialism, study Babylon from the point of view of Western representation?

Looking at the representation of Iraq's most famous ancient site in almost exclusively non-Iraqi contexts immediately raises the issue of cultural property. The physical removal of antiquities from Iraq has been conducted on a grand scale, and it is natural that we should think first of these physical remains when considering the ethics of cultural property in Mesopotamian archaeology. To think of this only in terms of the possession of physical objects, however, is to miss important and in some ways more permanent forms of possession. Despite modern Iraq's barely figuring in most of the discussion, this thesis considers the world's most famous extant representations of Babylon. By the same token, any bibliography today aiming to reflect the current state of academic knowledge regarding Babylon (or that of any primer on ancient Mesopotamia more generally) would include an overwhelming majority of citations from the United States and Western Europe. English is the dominant language in academic discourse, followed by German and French; knowledge of Arabic is still not considered necessary to study and participate in the discourse that takes Iraq's past as its subject matter. At the same time Western academic institutions benefit from huge economic advantages. Both these factors are in large part

colonial legacies. For all the licit and illicit export of Iraqi antiquities over the past two centuries, the extent to which Iraq's cultural heritage has been appropriated by outside powers is underestimated if measured in terms of artefacts alone. There will be opportunities throughout this thesis to discuss this so-called 'intangible' aspect of the cultural heritage debate (cf. Chapter 7), not least in tracing historically those processes that have led to the separation of Iraq's ancient and modern geography highlighted by Bahrani (1998). Bahrani calls for 'Iraq' to be used in place of Mesopotamia in more archaeological writing. This is not a satisfactory solution – Mesopotamia as understood by archaeologists also includes large areas of modern Syria and Turkey, whom the use of Iraq as a synonym for Mesopotamia would disenfranchise (Matthews 1999: 721) – but Bahrani's point that the naming is more than a petty semantic issue is a valid and important one. In this thesis both terms are used, as are terms such as Middle East, Near East and western Asia, with a view to reflecting the contexts and outlooks of sources' authors.

Although this thesis starts from the assumption that European political dominance is the single most important factor in understanding the cultural hegemony that has so marginalized Arabic sources in the study of Mesopotamia's ancient past, it is also necessary to analyse older, mainly European, explanations for the same phenomenon, impacting as they do on European perceptions of European work. At the simplest level, this means questioning the belief, commonly held in the nineteenth century and still popular in some quarters much more recently, that Arabs/Muslims/non-Europeans/They took no interest in history or the past, as they themselves lived

outside history and cared only for the immediate. This myth is one of the most destructive and counter-empathetic in the entire imperial/colonial canon. Not only does it casually degrade and infantilise the other (in this case They could be almost anyone; much the same was routinely argued for the intellectual capacity of women and the working classes), but it also enshrines as common sense a catastrophic misunderstanding of history and culture as human phenomena: the proposition that matters of history and cultural identity are details to be mused over once more immediate, serious needs have been met, hence that they are (a) bound to be the preserve of wealthy intellectuals in stable, secure environments, and (b) a luxury most people on earth can and do live without. Nothing could be further from the truth. Issues of history and culture are rendered important precisely by insecurity. The most important theorists of identity of our time work in postcolonial literature, sexual difference and queer theory, nationalism, ethnicity and race. These are fields whose very existences are driven by insecurity and threat. West describes this situation, its causes and its limitations:

> To put it bluntly, the new cultural politics of difference consists of creative responses to the precise circumstances of our present moment – especially those of marginalized First World agents who shun degraded self-representations, articulating instead their sense of the flow of history in light of the contemporary terrors, anxieties and fears of highly commercialized North Atlantic capitalist cultures (with their escalating xenophobias against people of colour, Jews, women, gays, lesbians and the elderly).
>
> (West 1990: 93-109)

It is true that the same insecurity and threat can also produce dogmatic, self-interested scholarship. As Anthony Smith realised, the two are part of the same phenomenon:

> It is fashionable for Western observers, securely ensconced in their own national identities forged in toil and blood several centuries ago, to pour scorn on the rhetorical excesses and misguided scholarship of nationalist intellectuals in nineteenth-century Europe or twentieth-century Africa and Asia. Those whose identities are rarely questioned and who have never known exile or subjugation of land and culture, have little need to trace their "roots" in order to establish a unique and recognizable identity. Yet theirs is only an implicit and unarticulated form of what elsewhere must be shouted from the rooftops: "We belong, we have a unique identity, we know it by our ancestry and history."
>
> (Smith 1986: 2)

This argument can be extended: the same security that allows one to be scornful of nationalist rhetoric can also cause one to be dismissive of the best work on cultural identity. If one's identity feels very secure (whether it is possible for one's identity to *be* secure is another question) there is no personal need to reflect on or theorise it. It is only because of this sense of security that archaeology can ever seem trivial or apolitical. Returning to Smith's notion of an "implicit and unarticulated form" we can see that this is never truly the case. Since all historical work relates at some level to identity, this point need not be confined to the cultural critique of the present. For Walter Benjamin, "To articulate the past historically does not mean to 'recognize it the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (Benjamin 1999 (1968): 247)

Linked to the myth of uninterest is the assumption of a dearth of Arabic historical sources generally, an assumption still overlooked, if not actually supported, in much Western scholarship on account of the difficulties of learning Arabic and the relative scarcity of good translations (in the case of Mesopotamian archaeology the translations problem is discussed by Matthews (2003b)). More difficult to assess are six other claims commonly made when looking at this question:

1. That the interests of Islamic theology have, for some, created a historical outlook that calls for an extreme or even near-exclusive focus on the early centuries of Islam – from the time of the Prophet to the early 'Abbasid period (Hourani 1983 (1962): 7).
2. That pre-Islamic history lost social relevance due to a widespread belief that Islam cancelled or made redundant all that had gone before.
3. That "while Arab culture strongly promoted the study of history, its stigmatising of the pre-monotheistic period as a *jahiliya*, or Age of Darkness, effectively discouraged the development of a scholarly interest in antiquarianism" (Trigger 1995: 267).
4. That the principle held by some medieval and later Islamic scholars that only allowed the preservation in writing of the Quran itself (Margoliouth 1930: 41-43) has led to a genuine vacuum in other areas.
5. That pre-Islamic history must necessarily take a low priority for those working to establish new and positive Islamic identities in the hostile

global present (and that such a hostile global present has existed in some form for a long time).

6. That the European imperial/colonial encounter caused many Arab intellectuals to turn away from a nascent historical tradition seen as uncomfortably close to that of the Europeans.

All of these claims are based on huge generalisations and should be treated with great caution: regardless of whether they bear any closer inspection, all can be and have been used to justify and naturalize a status quo in which Western institutions retain their dominance in the subject, and their right to the greatest say in shaping its future.

Although this project uses European primary sources it will be possible to connect with issues of Western and colonial bias to some extent. The sources and historical context here bear close similarity to a project which, through making such connections, plays an influential role in post-colonial thought: subaltern writing. Faced with the challenge of writing a history of India from below in a paradigm where the historical sources are extremely one-sided, writers have begun to work from the premise that

> [T]hough the documentary evidence of the colonial archive... takes its shape from the will of the colonial administrators themselves, it is also predicated upon another will, that of the insurgent. Consequently, it should be possible to read the presence of a rebel consciousness as a factor in the construction of that body of evidence"
>
> (Spivak 1996 (1985): 203)

Such a reading is not the main objective of this project, but it is a condition of its success. To understand what it is that Europeans are doing in Iraq we must know something of their relationships to place and people, and this means going beyond a purely European perspective. This is perhaps closer to Said's "contrapuntal reading" of Conrad, Kipling, Forster and others in *Culture and Imperialism* (Said 1993) than to true subaltern writing, but the central point is the same: it is possible to read colonial sources with a view to both colonizer and colonized, and to learn something about the latter perspective through that of the former.

What of Iraqi viewpoints on the history of the subject and its representation today? As a researcher I am conscious that my ability to conduct this research and my access to the necessary resources is dependent on my *not* being based in Iraq, whose academic system, at the time of writing, is only beginning to recover from the systematic deprivations of Ba^{c}thist censorship, a decade of economic sanctions and isolation from the international community, three wars, foreign occupation and, again at the time of writing, a growing insurgency and civil unrest across the country. It is not only in the fundamentals of stability and resources that I am privileged, however. This is a project that could only be developed and pursued within the framework of Anglophone archaeological discourse. The theoretical debates guiding our discipline are now concentrated at and largely dictated by a small number of British and American institutions. Although many archaeologists, particularly in prestigious European institutions, choose not to participate in this Anglo-American discourse, this bias should not be seen as an acceptable case of regional specialisation; rather it is one of the

greatest challenges facing world archaeology. It is one thing for the best scientific dating equipment to be concentrated in the universities of Western Europe and North America, or for students and faculty at these universities to have access to better libraries, more computers and the many other material advantages of rich states. These imbalances are grossly unfair and limit the research capacity of many of the world's best archaeologists, but ultimately they are worked around and only come to totally exclude researchers from participation in international discourse in the most extreme cases – of which present-day Iraq remains one. It is quite another kind of advantage, however, to hold a monopoly on the development of theory: theory is the driving force in our subject, defining our disciplinary aims and values, informing our research agendas, setting the boundaries of the possible and the desirable and affecting the criteria by which we judge the quality of research. As long as this monopoly is maintained North American and British scholars will continue to wield a disproportionate level of power and authority over the discipline, and to set agendas for the subject's future that can only be of benefit to the world if this small and privileged group judge extremely wisely. Since they are not representative of or familiar with every context in which the discipline operates, however, such omniscient good judgement is not to be expected. If we cannot redress this one crucial imbalance the rest of our work will always be flawed, and it is for this reason that so much emphasis has been placed in recent years on global participation in world archaeology (Ucko 1994 (1989): ix; 1995: 9).

How, then, might the academics and institutions holding this advantage ever relinquish it? The problem is normally seen as equivalent to introducing some

kind of sports handicap, leading to the argument that it is insoluble because research institutions are inherently competitive and cannot be expected to abandon such a 'lead.' The inequality, like so many others, has been understood as a matter of Progress. This is a dangerous and self-deluding myth, at its core no better than a high Victorian claim to imperial power on grounds of paternalistic, benevolent superiority. The Anglophone hegemony on theory is a direct consequence of power, and has nothing more to do with any kind of progress than the establishment and exercise of that power ever did. Nor, notwithstanding the best intentions, can 'we' in these institutions adequately speak for anyone but ourselves. This being the case, the most important part of any solution will be a greater recognition that democratisation of theoretical discourse benefits everyone, not only the disenfranchised majority. This is not a difficult proposition to defend: of course intellectual life benefits from involving the widest possible range of perspectives and the greatest number of brilliant thinkers. Our current limitations in both these respects are readily apparent. To make such an argument explicit is necessary, however, since influential thinkers have often argued the reverse:

> It's difficult not to read the New Humanists of the 1920s and 1930s with Allan Bloom in mind and not see in all of them what the historian Jackson Lears has called American antimodernism. In their cult of an almost sacralized past (when things were "better ordered") and their prescriptions for a small elite not only of readers but of writers, all these defenders of humanism equate the decline of standards primly, and in some way even despairingly, with modernity itself. They follow in the general path opened by Ortega y Gasset in his famous pamphlet *The Dehumanization of Art*, by eccentrically conservative English intellectuals such as H.G. Wells, Kipling, the Bloomsbury group, and D.H. Lawrence, and by the greatest romantic antimodernist of

> them all, the early Gerog Lukacs. In all these cases, a key pillar of faith is a surreptitious equation between popular and multicultural, multilingual democracy, on the one hand, and a horrendous decline in humanistic and aesthetic, not to say also ethical, standards, on the other.
>
> (Said 2004: 19-20)

Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* makes the case against such an equation, attempting to define a new humanism appropriate to the contemporary global intellectual sphere in a postcolonial/late modern world:

> For there is, in fact, no contradiction at all between the practice of humanism and the practice of participatory citizenship. Humanism is not about withdrawal and exclusion. Quite the reverse: its purpose is to make more things available to critical scrutiny as the product of human labor, human energies for emancipation and enlightenment, and, just as importantly, human misreadings and misinterpretations of the collective past and present.
>
> (Said 2004: 22)

The point of Said's argument is that "withdrawal and exclusion" are harmful not only for those withdrawn from and excluded, but for everyone and for all our intellectual work. Expanding participation in our discourse is essential, but it is not a matter of charitable outreach; at its best it is a matter of self-interest for the most enfranchised, powerful parties (i.e. large American and British research institutions), pursued in the knowledge of potential benefit for all concerned. If this is selfish it is not unethical. The 'outreach' perspective actually gives very base and superficial incentives: a salve to conscience, good

PR; the selfish viewpoint, by contrast, gives the incentive of producing better intellectual and critical work.

Deconstruction and narrative: cultural/literary questions in an archaeological context

Representation research consists largely of historicizing and deconstructing ideas and images – demystifying the object of research is in some ways the goal. As with any mechanism, the act of taking a representation apart to see how it works prevents it from working in quite the same way when we try to reassemble it. A significant project within both history and archaeology has been the study of European national origin myths in the context of conflict and oppression – archaeology employed for racist purposes in Nazi Germany is particularly well covered (Arnold and Hassmann 1995; Arnold 1990, 1992). In showing the myths of the past used to justify atrocities in our own time, we hope not only to remove a complicit fiction, but also to guard against similar abuses of history in the future. In this sense the aim is to destroy mythologies through their deconstruction. This is not the only way in which the deconstruction of representation can produce useful results however, and in the case of Babylon a different approach is necessary. In common with most other famous archaeological sites and ancient places, Babylon has been invoked in many political contexts, by many states and individuals, in support of or in opposition to many regimes. It can also be fairly claimed to be ancient Mesopotamia's most solid link with contemporary non-academic culture throughout the world. It is meaningful in the context of world religion, art and

literature, not to mention its place in the flux of ancient historical/Assyriological and archaeological interpretation. Although questioning aspects of nationalist and imperialist/colonialist representation is a significant part of this project, deconstruction with a view to comprehension is more important here than deconstruction with a view to negation. The intention is not to purge these perspectives, but to understand them.

The selection and special treatment of those aspects of Babylon's identity attested to beyond reasonable doubt in academic analysis is important, and the separation of this not inflexible body of understanding from that which is more speculative or even fanciful is still core to archaeological interpretation today, the main difference being an awareness that our criteria for such knowledge are unstable and historically contingent (Foucault 1970, 1972). Taken as an end in itself, however, such separation leaves us, in this case literally, with nothing but ruins. Rubble and dust, sherds and fragments are not ends in themselves, and rigour in method and interpretation cannot be turned into excuses for disengaging with the public or for avoiding the production of reconstructions and academic representations of the past. Theoretically informed attempts to rise to this challenge have been varied and often highly innovative – fortunately we work within an academic culture that values these efforts and allows for experiment. One product of this paradigm has been an increasing interest in the role of narratives (Nelson 2003; Roberts 1997; Sinclair 2000 (1989)). The use of narrative (which in a sense cannot be avoided, since "Like memory and remembering, history implies an *act* of historicising, of making history" (Shanks 1994: 170)), is seen as holding the potential for great multivocality and

empowerment, as well as a check on archaeologists' increasing reluctance to reconstruct a past they cannot know in its entirety. All this is part of a paradigm shift that affects archaeology at a structural level, in its very purpose and scope:

> Archaeology has internalized (and contributed to) the modernist faith in order and continuity. Its public legitimation is everywhere based on the taken-for-granted premise that the past constitutes a fundamental ground for collective identities in the present. In what way, then, do the new processes of dislocation, of hybridity and displacement, affect the socio-political agenda of archaeology, of museums and of present uses and consumptions of the past in general? Are the old slogans about identity and roots, which might give nations, ethnic groups and minorities 'a history', still an acceptable legitimation of the archaeological enterprise? Or is there a widening gap between this identity project, which in many ways is an offspring of nationalism, and the new forms of social reality, identity and belonging which presently are being forged out of the global-local nexus?
>
> (Olsen 2001: 42-43)

Despite, or perhaps due to the way these changes conflict with its modernist roots, archaeology stands to gain enormously from them. They allow diversification and the exploration of new perspectives; ultimately they allow individuals from within and outside the discipline to make conscious decisions about what the past means to them and what archaeology can or should be, and hence – with the caveats discussed above – a much greater plurality. This does not imply the subjugation of archaeology and history as they currently exist to mythology: the academic disciplines exist and are privileged as ways of knowing the past because people place a high value on the particular kind of authenticity they provide, valuing their rational-empirical foundations and high

standards of critical rigour. Nonetheless, the whole debate has moved towards models of contingent and situated knowledge about the past, knowledge that can be/inevitably is personal, biographical. This in turn creates a slightly strange illusion: that archaeology has come full circle. Austen Henry Layard was a great storyteller, a quality shared with many antiquaries and early archaeologists. The adventures recounted in *Nineveh and its Remains* (Layard 1849a) are as much of a personal, situated narrative as could be conceived. In fact, given that Layard had nothing to fear from expressing racism and a greater interest in buried treasure than archaeology *per se*, its difference from some later accounts could be defined primarily in terms of the degree of artful concealment employed. Whatever criticisms can fairly be levelled at *Nineveh and its Remains*, but the pretence of objectivity, spurious precision and hiding behind impersonal language are not among them.

Most archaeologists today share little with Layard in terms of worldview or aims. Why, then, is it acceptable, even laudable, to tell stories again? Certainly archaeology's increased sensitivity to the shifting sands of theoretical development in social and cultural anthropology and cultural studies (e.g. Gosden 1994, 1999) has facilitated the change, but the debate and its outcome have also been driven by longing: in a subject defined by fragmentary knowledge we seek the coherence and meaning narrative can give. This is not necessarily counter-productive. Excitement, experiment and variety do not negate the validity and importance of hypothesis testing or thorough research – hypothesis testing needs hypotheses, after all. There is, however, a necessary danger attached to allowing ourselves stories. The intellectual case for narrative

and even for storytelling specifically as interpretive strategies is strong (Roberts 1997), but so is the emotive effect of a coherent plot. A story, for all its semiotic and cultural reliance on external referents, is in one sense conceived as a discrete whole, defined by its ability to explain its parts internally with reference to that whole. It can be studied as a complete entity, and our questions of it find answers within the story itself. Further, the *quality* of the work is treated as a primarily internal matter. When, to take the case of English literature, Said (1993) examines *Kim*'s (Kipling 1994 (1901)) deeply rooted connections with the colonial cultural context of the novel's creation, his historical and cultural contextualisation of the work does not – and is not intended to – diminish the standing of *Kim* as a masterpiece of English literature (Karatani 2000: 151). Yet the novel has created for the reader a historical portrait of India no longer considered acceptable by scholars. Histories or cultural accounts of India written at the same time as *Kim* are now considered hopelessly obsolete – the stylistic values attaching to Victorian English literature as a format have outlasted several generations of academic historical thought with obvious ease, supporting Steedman's assertion that "the life of the written history is not very long; the written history is the most unstable of written forms" (Steedman 1999 (1992): 47-48). There is no good reason to imagine academic discourse immune to this aesthetic factor, and its consequences are significant. What if theories taking the form of stories, once created, are too compelling to destroy, and valid criticism is forgotten for want of great prose or ease of comprehension? This has actually happened in archaeology, with disastrous long-term consequences, in the creation (in those obsolete Victorian history books) and stubborn survival (far beyond them) of a

racist, sexist and consciously Eurocentric 'rise of civilisation' metanarrative, still prevalent in popular culture after decades of academic reproof.

Aesthetic appeal and strong narrative can be compelling, and the hold of completeness and internal coherence of a representation upon its consumer powerful. If these factors affect our consumption of writing they positively dominate our consumption of the image (Moser 1998: 171). Pictures differ from texts in that they are less able to qualify statements, offer multiple possibilities or express uncertainty. Nor are these the only significant differences: images are more immediate than texts in terms of consumption and less linear – the whole is presented in an instant. The whole is also presented *first*, with recognition and interpretation of detail by the viewer following and, naturally, being incorporated into the framework of the first impression (Davey 1999: 7). Many of the arguments and structures discussed in this thesis are primarily visual: for example, the differences in the rules of composition and the experience of viewing archaeological plans and oil paintings. The analysis of visual media has much in common with the analysis of texts. Our modes of comprehension are intertwined such that we find it difficult to write or speak without using visual metaphors, while in describing the visual through spoken or written language we cannot but translate it into textual form. For these reasons I will not avoid linguistic or textual analogies where they seem appropriate to the source and its content; at the same time, however, the differences between the visual and the textual listed above must be recognised.

Conclusion

The benefits – and many of the difficulties – of studying representation in archaeology arise from a need to address questions of historical process and patterns of change and continuity in the discipline's development. These questions have relevance to the history of science as a whole and taken in the broadest sense, in that they directly affect our understanding of how cultural and intellectual paradigms, knowledge and epistemologies develop and, by extension, what knowledge is. The present thesis cannot discuss these questions in more than a local, limited way: we will be able to ask how knowledge of Babylon develops, and what knowledge of Babylon is. These are ambitious questions in their own right; the larger general questions noted above are the domain of philosophy and rest to a great extent on one's views of empiricism, of subjectivity, and of humanism as a basis for knowledge, although historical study can certainly inform them.

Chapter 3: Babylon in Biblical and Classical Sources

This chapter introduces and analyses the most important biblical and classical sources on Babylon. They include the most influential and highly regarded of all sources on the city at least until the advent of archaeology and Assyriology and arguably far beyond.

Biblical narratives have been central to European awareness of Babylon, up to and including present-day academic thought. Old Testament narratives together with the Revelation of John[35] provide the foundation not only for later artistic and literary representations of the ancient city, but also for scholarly interest in its remains. Almost without exception the archaeological and Assyriological studies that would eventually provide challenges to the biblical accounts began as a perceived opportunity to affirm those narratives. Biblical associations have consistently provided Mesopotamian archaeology's strongest link with public interest, and from Layard and Botta's Assyrian discoveries onward biblical connections have been key to generating institutional and financial support for Mesopotamian fieldwork projects. Over time academic research priorities themselves have moved steadily away from a concern with examining, affirming or refuting the veracity of Old Testament narratives as the biases such projects have produced in research agendas become more widely acknowledged (Whitelam 1996), but it would be naïve to treat concern with biblical themes in

archaeology (regardless of whether this falls within the sub-discipline of Biblical archaeology as currently defined) as a spent force. As Silberman argues with regard to the survival of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR),

> There is no question that an increasing number of ASOR excavation projects are carried out in co-operation (sometimes even as junior partners) with Israeli, Jordanian and Cypriot sponsors. There is no question that the employment prospects of American scholars are affected by the same brutal budgetary cutbacks that have affected all the humanities. But the present transformations of ASOR do not constitute omens of its imminent death. In its stubborn refusal to surrender itself entirely to the authority of the dominant archaeological paradigms and practices of each historical period, American Biblical Archaeology has always been dying. And its continuing survival is testimony to the possibility that a certain brand of archaeology can survive by maintaining a coalition that attempts to bridge the particular interests of its members without homogenising them.
>
> (Silberman 1998: 186)

Silberman's identification of the diversity of interests and approaches that, for him, provides the best protection against the much-touted obsolescence of Biblical archaeology, points also at the significant difference between a sub-discipline united only in subject matter (e.g. classical archaeology), and a school united in theoretical approach (e.g. the New Archaeology). The former, while exerting influence on research outcomes only through the disciplinary associations it creates and reinforces, is less threatened by the revolutions and paradigm shifts of the latter. It could reasonably be argued that ASOR originally represented both, with little disagreement in its early years over the aims,

methods or limits of Biblical archaeology as perceived by its practitioners. If we accept Silberman's assertion this simple identification is no longer valid, although, as with the archaeology of Western Asia more generally, stereotypes regarding the theoretical orientation (or unreflective ignorance thereof) of its practitioners may well persist and can substantially damage the subject's development, as can be seen in the near-total exclusion of some sub-disciplines in archaeology from the core of theoretical debate.

> Traditional humanist and antiquarian archaeologies are still around. Apart from some adoption of scientific recovery techniques, large sections of archaeology remain untouched by the development in archaeological thinking of the last three decades. This is particularly the case in Britain and in Classical and Near Eastern archaeology. (Shanks 1992)

Aside from its puzzling disapproval of humanist archaeologies (the vast bulk of academic work today, including Shanks's writing and this thesis, remains firmly grounded in a broadly humanist tradition and is no less progressive or innovative for that), this assessment risks creating a vicious circle. There is a danger that students interested in theory will eschew a field they imagine to be hostile (despite the existence of high-profile projects driven by new developments in theory, most prominently Çatalhöyük (Hodder 2000)), while those attempting to avoid this side of archaeology may come to the study of the ancient Near East in search of a haven in which they will be able to practise what they see as the straightforward, romantic, responsibility-free archaeology of the field's early practitioners. The archaeology of Western Asia was born as the search for lost cities. Early excavators in Mesopotamia sought their

justification and prestige through the identification of Biblical names and locations. The apparently miraculous discovery of an enormous ancient city in northern Iraq in the 1840s, while amazing in itself, could garner far more interest from all quarters if that city were Nineveh. Perhaps it is not so surprising that Layard and Botta both succeeded in finding the ancient city, overcoming the logistical obstacle of digging some distance both from one another and from the Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus mounds. Interest in Sir Leonard Woolley's famous excavations at Ur was considerably heightened by his conviction that he had uncovered stratigraphic evidence for the deluge of Genesis[1] (Woolley 1930). Today news coverage of the Mesopotamian past still relies on the biblical links of both Babylon and the Garden of Eden to help orient readers and give context to less familiar names and places (Seymour 2004: 360).

The contents of the Bible were and are better known popularly than those of the Greek classics for all periods with which this thesis is concerned. The latter remain enormously important, however. They have been widely read and taught in modern Europe, and were certainly well known and referenced by a majority of modern artists and writers representing the Mesopotamian past. The interplay of biblical and classical traditions has been a longstanding and hugely important element of the history of European scholarship in general (Levin 1966: 86). Of these Greek sources the most important in terms of the modern representation of Babylon have been Herodotus and Ctesias, who will be covered in some detail below, along with other Greek and Latin sources.

Although one aim of this thesis is the analysis of confusion and conflation between the key Biblical and classical accounts of Babylon, for the purpose of introducing these sources it is simplest to treat the two as separate traditions, one strictly Hebrew, the other strictly Greek, unified internally but only coming into contact with one another much later through translation of Scripture into Greek and Latin. This is not the case in reality, but questions of direct and indirect influence, the role of other languages (particularly Aramaic and Old Persian) and of shared sources can be approached with more clarity once we have familiarised ourselves with the sources in general: there are many problems we need to be aware of within each group of sources before looking at relationships between them. At the same time, the separation will serve to emphasise some important differences between the classical and Biblical traditions, and will accurately reflect a persistent division in their treatment by later historians, writers and artists.

Biblical accounts

Although there are several quite different biblical narratives associated with Babylon – the Tower of Babel, the Babylonian Captivity, Babylon as Rome in the apocalyptic Revelation – the theme of a rise to great but godless power and a subsequent fall is a constant. Beyond this, however, the Babylon of Genesis and that of Revelation are radically different to that of the other Books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha and will be dealt with separately. First we will focus on some of the defining historical events of the Old Testament – the siege of Jerusalem, the Babylonian Captivity and the return from exile – and their treatment in the biblical accounts.

Babylon and the experience of the Babylonian Captivity pervade the Old Testament and Apocrypha. It is often noted that reliance on the Bible has permanently distorted our view of Western Asia, focussing our attention on a short period of time and a very limited range of perspectives. The problematic consequences of this for Levantine archaeology have been explored by Keith Whitelam:

> The search for ancient Israel predisposed historians and archaeologists to emphasise disruptions in material culture as evidence for cultural and ethnic discontinuity. This articulated well with the view that the cultural and ethnic break which had been brought about first by European colonialism and later through Zionist immigration was mirrored in the ancient past. The representation of the Late Bronze Age as a period of dramatic urban collapse and cultural decline to be replaced by a radically new culture which was to give birth to monotheism and the Hebrew Bible appeared to confirm and mirror what was happening in the early decades of the twentieth century. Yet the significance of continuities in material culture, which had long been known by archaeologists working in the region, were ignored or underplayed.
>
> (Whitelam 1996: 228)

Such artefacts of biblical influence can also be seen in the archaeology of Mesopotamia. We learn of Assyria and Babylonia as powerful enemies and oppressors of Israel because of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, and particularly their policies of mass deportation. It is common for archaeologists and historians to refer to 'the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar' when talking about Babylon in even quite general terms, and this is a habit stemming undoubtedly from the particular concerns of the Old Testament accounts.

From the late eighth century BCE onward the societies and small states of the Levant were subject to the rule of empires. Assyrian military strength led to control over a huge geographical area during the early first millennium BCE, but administration to deal with this unprecedented expansion developed slowly and piece-meal (Grayson 1995: 962). Tax and tribute from the provinces, vassals and puppet states made a major contribution to the wealth of the Assyrian heartland, but came with the increased complexity of ruling a large and disparate empire. Preventing uprisings on the fringes of the empire was a major concern for Assyrian kings, and a number of policies developed to meet this need, among them mass deportations. When new territory was conquered or a rebellious vassal crushed, an increased imperial presence in the trouble spot was often complemented by the removal of large numbers of the indigenous population to the imperial core, effectively breaking up the rebellious population and reducing the potential for future resistance. The practice was effective, and continued throughout the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires until 539 BC and Cyrus's conquest of Babylon. The majority of the immigrant population were not slaves (Yamauchi 2002: 365), and some did rise to high status positions at the core of the empire (a possibility reflected in the career of the biblical Daniel[18], who rises to the status of trusted royal confidant).

This last aspect, also common (if not as formalised) in later empires, could be seen as a harmonising, inclusive approach to creating and maintaining a viable imperial identity, and to effectively ruling a religiously and ethnically diverse empire. Most non-Babylonian sources, however, take a dimmer view of the

policy. Of these foreign sources one group have had an impact far greater than most ancient texts, including those of the imperial elites themselves, in forming modern identities for ancient Babylonia. The historical events are summarised by Van De Mieroop:

> [F]or years Babylonia and Egypt contended with each other for supremacy. The Babylonian forces were led by Nebuchadnezzar II, first as crown prince, then as king. In 605 he inflicted a serious defeat on the Egyptians near the north Syrian city of Carchemish. Soon afterwards his father died and he had to rush to Babylon to secure his hold on the throne. He returned to the west immediately, and although battles were fought close to Egypt, Babylonia had a hard time asserting its authority there. States constantly rebelled in support of Egypt. Best known is the situation in Judah, which was turned into a province of the Babylonian empire following the pattern Assyria had established centuries before. In 597, the local king was removed by Nebuchadnezzar and replaced by a puppet ruler, while a large part of the population was deported to Babylonia itself. The newly installed king turned against his master, however, and after a siege the capital Jerusalem was destroyed and more people were deported in 587. In 582 the Babylonian governor was assassinated and Nebuchadnezzar had to intervene again, deporting even more Judaeans.
>
> (Van De Mieroop 2004a: 258-259)

This, of course, is a thoroughly Babylonian perspective: a troublesome state on the fringe of the empire; one that needed to be suppressed as much to strengthen the Babylonian position against Egypt as for its own sake. This conception of what became known as the Babylonian Captivity did not begin to emerge until the late nineteenth century CE. During the intervening two thousand years these events were known only from the Judean perspective, as a central event in the

history of this community became a central event in the history of the Judaeo-Christian world.

Psalm 137

The Old Testament perspective is epitomized in probably the most famous and most heavily quoted passage on Babylon, Psalm[3] 137:

137: 1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept
As we remembered Zion.
2 On the willow trees there
We hung up our lyres,
3 For there those who had carried us captive
Asked us to sing them a song,
Our captors called on us to be joyful:
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'
4 How could we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, Jerusalem,
May my right hand wither away;
6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
If I do not remember you,
If I do not set Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

7 Remember, LORD, against the Edomites
The day when Jerusalem fell,
How they shouted, 'Down with it, down with it,

Down to its very foundations!'

[8] Babylon, Babylon the destroyer,

Happy is he who repays you

For what you did to us!

[9] Happy is he who seizes your babes

And dashes them against a rock.

(Psalms 137: 1-9)

The Babylonian Captivity is a defining experience in the Old Testament: beyond the accounts of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem, the deportation to Babylon and the return to Jerusalem granted by Cyrus themselves, much of the Old Testament was written and/or set in Babylonia. Beyond even this there is a further association apparent to Mesopotamian archaeologists and Assyriologists in the Mesopotamian literary traditions on which Old Testament narratives often draw, the famous examples being Nahum and the Song of Songs, but evident throughout the Old Testament: in particular both demons and demonic possession (a Babylonian element (Saggs 1962: 487)) and named angels (Iranian (Stoyanov 2000: 55)) have their origins in exposure to Mesopotamian culture.

Accounts of the Babylonian Captivity

These elements are interesting in terms of Mesopotamian legacy, but for the representation of Babylon it is the actual accounts of the Captivity that concern us. The capture and destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent deportation of Jews to Babylon is not only a major event from the perspective of the biblical authors, but one of enormous and continuing symbolic value in Judaism and

Christianity. The three major biblical versions of the story are in 2 Kings[2] 25.1-21, 2 Chronicles[8] 36.17-21 and (as prophecy) Jeremiah[7] 52.3-30. This, on a par with the Exodus (whose Old Testament form seems itself to be heavily influenced by the Babylonian Captivity (Finkelstein and Silberman 2002: 48-71)), is a case of forced migration on which later Jewish and Christian ideologies have focussed as a touchstone for righteous struggle against oppression. It is a contributing factor in the development of Zionism, and the cultural importance of Jerusalem. It is also a story of great importance to Rastafarians, for whom an identification with the forced migrations of the European slave trade to a large extent leave Africa and the Americas directly representing Zion and Babylon respectively (see Chapter 7).

In both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles the siege of Jerusalem and Captivity are the subject of the final chapter, although the two accounts end at different points. 2 Kings ends with the release of Jehoiachin:

> 25: 27 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month, King Evil-merodach of Babylon in the year of his accession showed favour to king Jehoiachin. He released him from prison, 28 treated him kindly, and gave him a seat at table above the kings with him in Babylon. 29 Jehoiachin, discarding his prison clothes, lived as a pensioner of the king for the rest of his life. 30 For his maintenance as long as he lived a regular daily allowance was given him by the king.
>
> (2 Kings 25: 27-30)

Whereas 2 Chronicles, while only treating the period of the Captivity very briefly, extends to the rule of Cyrus and the release of the Jews. Specifically its final two passages, repeated at the beginning of Ezra[9] (1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah originally formed a single book (Keck and Tucker 1992: 14)), offer one of the Bible's most famous links with archaeology, in that the text is seen by many as referring to the *Cyrus Cylinder*[5], now one of the most important primary sources on the transition between the Babylonian and Achaemenid empires. The passage runs:

> 36: 22 / 1: 1 In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD, to fulfil his word spoken through Jeremiah, inspired the king to issue throughout his kingdom the following proclamation, which he also put in writing:
>
> 23 / 2 The decree of King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Whoever among you belongs to his people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.
>
> (2 Chronicles 36: 22-23 / Ezra 1: 1-3)

The proclamation is completed in Ezra:

> 1: 3 Whoever among you belongs to his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and build the house of the LORD the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 Let every Jew left among us, wherever he is settled throughout the country, be helped by his neighbours with silver and gold, goods and livestock, in addition to the voluntary offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.
>
> (Ezra 1: 3-4)

A variant of the same text also appears in the Apocrypha, in 1 Esdras[20] 2: 3-7 (Esdras is the Greek form of Ezra used in the Apocrypha; Ezra is the supposed author of 1 and 2 Esdras, which continue the historical narrative from 2 Chronicles and end on the only apocalyptic sequence in the Apocrypha in 2 Esdras). The "house" is the Second Temple, another major Old Testament theme. Whether or not the proclamation here refers specifically to the *Cyrus Cylinder*, it is clear enough that these are not the exact words of Cyrus, who was not himself a convert to Judaism. His place in the story as liberator, however, has accorded him a sympathetic portrait in the biblical accounts and, by extension, later histories. Yuri Stoyanov, who argues that Achaemenid imperial rhetoric itself was a major influence, links his place in the biblical representation of Babylon to Persian dualism:

> Amid what the Persian imperial propaganda described as jubilant scenes of celebration he established himself in the Babylonian palace of the kings. Cyrus' manifesto, the so-called *Cyrus Cylinder*, and the *Verse Account of Nabonidus* [4], which was apparently composed in Babylonian priestly circles, praised Cyrus' capture of Babylon as an act of salvation for the city of Bel Marduk, which was lamented for having suffered desecration during the reign of the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, Nabonidus. Both versions of Cyrus' collision with Nabonidus contrast the image of Cyrus as a saviour-king, chosen by Marduk to bring peace to Babylon, to that of Nabonidus as a heretical king, a royal adversary of Marduk, opposed to his priesthood and his worship in Esaglia, 'the temple of heaven and the underworld'.
>
> (Stoyanov 2000: 49)

This dualism, Stoyanov argues, is of Persian and Babylonian origin, and comes to strongly influence not only accounts of Babylon, but also the role of Lucifer and the Fallen Angels in Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic literature.

Prophetic accounts

The idea of a second, ultimately weaker negative power seems to enter the monotheistic cosmology of Judaism at around the time of the Captivity. That power is Lucifer, and, as Stoyanov points out, an explicit link is made between this figure and the unnamed king of Babylon in Isaiah[6] 14. Lucifer is the Latin Vulgate translation of *Helel ben Shahar*, which in English can be rendered Son of Dawn, Son of the Morning, Day Star or Shining One (Stoyanov 2000: 50; REV Oxford Study Bible notes: 718). The reference is contained in a song mocking the fallen king of Babylon:

> 14: 12 Bright morning star [*Helel ben Shahar*], how you have fallen from heaven,
> Thrown to earth, prostrate among the nations!
> 13 You thought to yourself:
> 'I shall scale the heavens
> To set my throne high above the mighty stars;
> I shall take my seat on the mountains where the gods assemble
> In the far recesses of the north.
> 14 I shall ascend beyond the towering clouds
> And make myself like the Most High!'
>
> 15 Instead you are brought down to Sheol [the underworld],
> Into the depths of the abyss.
> 16 Those [shades] who see you stare at you,

Reflecting as they gaze:

'Is this the man who shook the earth,

Who made kingdoms quake,

[17] Who turned the world into a desert

And laid its cities in ruins,

Who never set his prisoners free?'

(Isaiah 14: 12-17)

If the entry of the king of Babylon into Jewish prophetic literature is closely related to the entry of Lucifer and the Fallen Angels the parallels (emphasised in the song extract above) start to make more sense, and to give us an appreciation of Babylon's place as a literary entity in the Old Testament. Stoyanov's line of argument also helps explain the ease with which the fall of Babylon enters apocalyptic literature as metaphor in Daniel, Revelation and later apocalyptic tradition. This is an important point, since as we shall see the association with apocalypse is one aspect of Babylon's identity regularly emphasised in modern representation.

In Isaiah, the "bright morning star" is never named, and the identity of the last king of Babylon is a significant problem in other biblical accounts. The problem is most apparent in Daniel, yet in many ways it is here that we find the 'definitive' biblical Babylon; the version of the city and its rulers that has inspired and informed most other representations of the city since.

First, it is significant from the standpoint of later portrayals that the only apocalyptic text in the Old Testament is set in Babylon. The city's role as

metaphor for Rome in the later apocalypse of John, and in modern interest in apocalyptic eschatology will be discussed (below and in chapter 4, respectively). A description of the destruction of the city is not itself part of the Daniel apocalypse, however. Daniel's vision of the "time of the end" (Daniel 11: 40) begins with a war between the kingdoms of the north and the south. These are Hellenistic kingdoms – Daniel 11 alludes to the rise of Alexander, and the division of his empire among the generals:

> 11: 2 Here and now I shall tell you what is true. Three more kings will appear in Persia, followed by a fourth who will far surpass all the others in wealth; and when by his wealth he has extended his power, he will mobilize the whole empire against the kingdom of Greece. 3 Then there will appear a warrior king, who will rule a vast kingdom and do whatever he pleases. 4 But once he is established, his kingdom will be broken up and divided to the four quarters of heaven. It will not pass to his descendants; nor will its power be comparable to his, for his kingdom will be uprooted and given to others besides his posterity.
>
> (Daniel 11: 2-4)

Daniel's career at Babylon occupies more space than his apocalyptic visions, however, and could be reasonably expected to serve a function in the whole book beyond the simple legitimation of Daniel as a prophet. Nor is it likely that this is simply the remarkable biography of a historical individual from the time of the Captivity. Collins argues that the tradition of a great prophet of this name is older:

> [T]he figure of Daniel may be more akin to Enoch than to Ezra or Baruch [11]. The Bible contains no reference to a prophet by this name outside the actual book of

> Daniel. In the book of Ezekial (an actual prophet of the exile) we do, however, have two references to Daniel. Ezek. 14:14 says that when a land sins against God "even if these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they would deliver only their own lives." Ezekial 28:3 taunts the king of Tyre: "Are you wiser than Daniel?" It would appear from these references that Daniel was the name of a legendary wise and righteous man.
>
> (Collins 1998 (1984): 86-87)

Although it could be argued that Ezekial refers to a revered prophet of his own day, likening Daniel to those of legend, this seems less probable than the explanation given by Collins. Why then do Babylon and its succession of rulers feature so heavily? Why is the book even set during the Babylonian Exile?

As with much apocalyptic literature, the accurate prediction of later events in the text, written as prophecy, gives us a relatively unproblematic guide to the earliest date of composition (McGinn 1998 (1979): 7). This argument, placing it in the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE), remains the best available guide to the dates of chapters 7-12, although chapters 1-6 are more problematic (Collins 1998: 87-88). In terms of composition, there is an apparent break between chapters 6 and 7. The cycle of Babylonian rule (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede) in chapters 1-6 is repeated in chapters 7-9. This coincides with two other changes: the onset of visions in the narrative and a markedly more negative attitude to the Babylonian kings.

The Daniel 4 episode of Nebuchadnezzar's seven years in the wilderness (eventually to be the subject of William Blake's *Nebuchadnezzar* (Butlin 1990:

90) is thought to have arisen from cuneiform texts concerning Nabonidus, the last neo-Babylonian king (ruled 555-539 BC). The *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Verse Account of Nabonidus* in particular furnished details of Nabonidus's heretical behaviour prior to the fall of Babylon (Stoyanov 2000: 49). Nabonidus's absence from Babylon, attested from his own inscriptions for at least three years, is seized on in the *Verse Account of Nabonidus*, emphasising the king's neglect. In the *Prayer of Nabonidus* this absence takes on a mythology – Nabonidus "lived apart from men" for seven years. In Daniel, this becomes the seven years' punishment of Nebuchadnezzar (Sack 1991: 103).

Nabonidus's attempt to elevate the role of the moon-god Sin (and in particular his mother Adda-Guppi's temple to Sin at Harran) (Oates 1986: 132) reminds us of a more famous parallel: the case of Akhenaten in Egypt. Like Akhenaten, Nabonidus apparently attempted religious reforms that would weaken a powerful priestly class; the priests of Amun at Thebes, and of Esagila, the temple of Marduk, at Babylon. There is also a parallel in the abandonment of the capital, although in Akhenaten's case this was to found a new capital, Akhetaten (El-Amarna), whereas Nabonidus stayed absent while campaigning in Arabia (his repeated absence at New Year prevents a festival, and according to the *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Verse Account* contributes to the city's misfortune. In both cases the king's death is quickly followed by a re-assertion of old religious values, the damning (in the case of Nabonidus) or erasure (Akhenaten) of the former monarch for posterity and, through the premature death of Tutankhamun and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, the replacement of the ruling dynasty. These elements of the Nabonidus story appear in Daniel as Nebuchadnezzar's time

living as a wild beast and the downfall of Belshazzar. The Babylon of Nabonidus now passed to the Persian Cyrus, that of Daniel's Belshazzar to an aged Darius the Mede (Daniel 5: 30-31), possibly as an attempt to reconcile sources with a preconceived historical scheme in which Medes preceded Persians in the succession of empires (Collins 1998: 86).

This is not an isolated conflation of historical identities. The name of Nebuchadnezzar in Hebrew, Aramaic and later Arabic writings came to be associated with other figures, including the much more recent invaders of Jerusalem, Vespasian and Titus. Al-Biruni (AD 973-1048) observing the attribution of Nebuchadnezzar's identity to Roman emperors (who he refers to as "Greek kings") commented that "It seems that the people of Jerusalem call everybody who destroyed their town Nebukadnezar" (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*[56] (Sachau 1879: 297). Although the Daniel author/s show confusion in the identity of his successors, there is a reasonable argument for an intentional conflation of Nabonidus and Nebuchadnezzar in this case. If we accept that representations of Nabonidus in cuneiform sources are echoed in Daniel, then it is reasonable to ask how the name associated with these representations could have been lost. If the author/s drew directly on such sources the conflation must have been conscious. If conflation occurred in a hypothetical chain of intermediate written sources or folklore it is still likely that a conscious conflation took place. Unless the story replaced the name with 'king of Babylon' – in which case we should be surprised to find names re-inserted in Daniel – someone has to read/hear Nabonidus and write/say Nebuchadnezzar – and clearly the substitution of another historical name is different from the

gradual corruption of the original one, e.g. our own Nebuchadnezzar (as opposed to Nebuchadrezzar, or even Nabu-kudurri-usur). Criticism of Nabonidus suited the purpose of emphasizing the faults of the hated Nebuchadnezzar. The identity of the king of Babylon in this context is not a historical individual so much as a type, and showing the character of this type is the aim, prioritised over accuracy in representing a single historical king, be that king Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus. The problem is exacerbated by equal confusion over the identity and place of Belshazzar. Dougherty (1929: 11-13) summarises 13 ancient non-cuneiform accounts of the succession, with considerable variation in the sequence of rulers given.

The ultimate fate of Babylon is most vividly described in Jeremiah. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the strong imagery of this account heavily influenced medieval travellers' eye-witness descriptions of Babylon. One passage in particular is frequently echoed:

> 50: 39 Therefore marmots and jackals will skulk in it, desert-owls will haunt it; never more will it be inhabited and age after age no one will dwell in it. 40 It will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah along with their neighbours, says the LORD; no one will live in it, no human being will make a home there.
>
> (Jeremiah 50: 39-40)

Continuing with the theme of Babylon's undoing, we can now move on to two very different biblical sources: Genesis and Revelation.

Genesis

The story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) is if anything better known than the historical events of the Captivity, and requires only the briefest summary: Following the Flood, some of Noah's descendents move eastward and settle in biblical Shinar (Sumer). They attempt to resist being scattered all across the world by building a huge tower in brick and tar. This angers God who, to thwart the plan and place limits on human ambition, causes the inhabitants of Babylon to speak many different languages, thus halting construction. There is a play on words in the story – Babel sounds like the Hebrew verb *balal*, 'to confuse.' The story itself is intended to explain the origin of multiple languages, but the city whose great size and pride have led to decay, fragmentation and confusion strikes a chord with modern political thinkers, and this is a significant factor in the continuing popularity of Bruegel's *Tower of Babel* images (Chapter 5), frequently reproduced for book covers on themes of nationalism, ethnicity and cultural identity. It is worth noting that the confusion of tongues is absolutely distinct in the Old Testament from the historical fall of Babylon; the ease with which the two are combined in subsequent representations is discussed in Chapter 4.

The remainder of Genesis 11 consists of one of the biblical passages most clearly paralleled in Mesopotamian literature: genealogies following the flood (descendants of Shem (Genesis 11:10-25) and descendants of Terah (Genesis 11:26-32)), with life-spans considerably shorter than those which preceded it. These have parallels in the early part of the Sumerian King-List.

The New Testament: Revelation

The final biblical source to discuss is the Revelation of John. This account, the only New Testament apocalypse and indeed the only New Testament source used in this thesis, is much later (first century CE, apparently completed during the reign of Domitian, 81-96 CE) than any of our other biblical accounts, and very different in its composition and purpose. Although it makes constant reference to the Old Testament, using references familiar to Christians to mask politically dangerous statements, the subject matter of Revelation is contemporary: the Babylon of Revelation is a metaphor for first century CE Rome. This, of course, does not prevent Revelation acting as a source for ideas and imagery on Babylon itself. The Whore of Babylon first appears here, embodying Rome/Babylon/the Pagan world and its corruption:

> 17: 1 One of the seven angels who held the seven bowls came and spoke to me; 'Come,'
> he said, 'I will show you the verdict of the great whore, she who is enthroned over
> many waters. 2 The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and people
> of the world have made themselves drunk on the wine of her fornication.' 3 He carried
> me in spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman mounted on a scarlet beast which
> was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The
> woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and decked out with gold and precious stones
> and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscenities and the foulness of her
> fornication. 5 Written on her forehead was a name with a secret meaning: 'Babylon the
> great, the mother of whores and of every obscenity on earth.' 6 I saw the woman was
> drunk with the blood of God's people, and with the blood of those who had borne their
> testimony to Jesus.
>
> (Revelation 17: 1-6)

Both the woman and the beast represent Babylon (Dronke 1986: 71). The vivid apocalyptic imagery of Revelation has undoubtedly informed many later representations of Babylon. In Chapter 4 we will discuss the appeal of Babylon in romanticism, and here we will return to the language and moral message of Revelation frequently. Of course, this is not a message first conceived here, and nor is all the symbolism original. In the quote above reference is made to Jeremiah:

> 51: 7 Babylon has been a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
> To make all the earth drunk;
> The nations have drunk of her wine,
> And that has made them mad.
> (Jeremiah 51: 7)

Nonetheless, the anthropomorphic representation of Babylon here is a significant step from even the King of Babylon of Isaiah. Once created, she is a figure whose identity infuses all the others. As will be seen below there is much scope for this in the Mesopotamia of Ctesias[13]. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the extent to which this potential is realised, and the ways in which this passage is conflated with the Greek identities of Semiramis and Sardanapalus in modern representation.

Classical accounts

Herodotus

Of the many Greek sources on Babylon, the two most sustained and detailed surviving descriptions come from Herodotus (*Histories*[10] Book I) and Ctesias of Cnidus (in Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheke Historica*[25] Book II). These accounts, along with the almost entirely lost description of Berossus[17], are highly influential, informing sources on Babylon from antiquity to the present. Of the three, the most famous in modernity is Herodotus, and it is with this account that any consideration of the influence of classical sources on Babylon must begin.

The Herodotus account is probably most famous for its description of the walls of Babylon:

> It is surrounded by a broad deep moat full of water, and within the moat there is a wall fifty royal cubits wide and two hundred high (the royal cubit is three inches longer than the ordinary cubit). (I.179) And now I must describe how the soil dug out to make the moat was used, and the method of building the wall. While the digging was going on, the earth that was shovelled out was formed into bricks, which were baked in ovens as soon as a sufficient number were made; then using hot bitumen for mortar the workmen began by revetting with brick each side of the moat, and then went on to erect the actual wall. In both cases they laid rush-mats between every thirty courses of brick. On the top of the wall they constructed, along each edge, a row of one-roomed buildings facing inwards with enough space between for a four-horse chariot to pass. There are a hundred gates in the circuit of the wall, all of bronze with bronze uprights and lintels.
>
> (*Histories* I. 178-179)

This short passage alone has been the focus of much speculation on Herodotus and the veracity of his account. There are plenty of details to work with: the dimensions of the wall, the manner of its construction, the layers of rush matting and the gates. This last is obviously wrong, but raises questions itself. In his notes to the Aubrey de Sélincourt translation John Marincola observes that "the hundred gates are a Homeric echo (*Il.* X.383); in fact there were eight" (Marincola 2003: 633, following Roux 1980 (1964): 391). No reference to the *Iliad* could be considered particularly obscure, so we might presume that such borrowing from a Homeric reference to Thebes was intended to be recognised, and recognised as poetic licence. Unless Marincola is mistaken and Herodotus is basing this statement on another source – and there seems to be no reason to think this is the case – the Homeric reference gives us an early hint that Herodotus's description is not intended simply to record accurately the minutiae of Babylon's defences, economy, history and customs.

It is important to note that many inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the ancient descriptions of Babylon cannot be well explained as mistakes, nor do they necessarily stem from ignorance. In the case of Herodotus, particular historical circumstance and the establishment of a new genre should be considered:

> Herodotus' goal was to give pleasure to the reader and to recreate the past. But Herodotus also needed to establish the credibility of his story. The poet Homer claimed to be inspired by the Muse, but the historian claimed his authority by his personal observation (autopsy) and by doing research. Hence he dutifully went to Egypt to question local priests on Egyptian culture, but he also embellished his history with

> imaginative elaborations and thrilling drama... Herodotus knew his audience and their taste... He needed to ensure that his listeners, and his readers as well, be entertained, as they had been by epic poems.
>
> (Mellor 1999: 7)

The elements of narrative and entertainment were recognised as necessary parts of the work in antiquity: "Aristotle called Herodotus a *mythologos*, a teller or weaver of plots, dramatically setting acts or incidents in relation to one another (Grant 1970: 52).

In an early but highly influential use of Assyriology to interrogate ancient Greek sources, Sayce (1883) questioned Herodotus's claims about Babylon one by one. Working methodically through his account, Sayce effectively demolished the authority of Herodotus's description. So convincing was his argument that much of it is only now being questioned, and a large part remains academic orthodoxy. Although Sayce was despairing of Herodotus as historian, he had a clear idea of what, if not accurate historical description, the value of Herodotus could be for the modern student:

> The net result of Oriental research in its bearing upon Herodotos is to show that the greater part of what he professes to tell us of the history of Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia, is really a collection of "märchen," or popular stories, current among the Greek loungers and half-caste dragomen on the skirts of the Persian empire. For the student of folklore they are invaluable, as they constitute almost the only record we have of the folklore of the Mediterranean in the fifth century before our era; and its examination and comparative treatment by a Felix Liebrecht or a Ralston would be a work of the highest interest and importance. After all, it is these old stories that lend as great a

> charm to the pages of Herodotos as they do to those of Mediæval travellers like Mandeville or Marco Polo; and it may be questioned whether they are not of higher value for the history of the human mind than the most accurate descriptions of kings and generals, of war treaties and revolutions.
>
> (Sayce 1883: xi-xii)

This notion of the value of Herodotus is not far removed from the central premise of this project: that stories and ideas associated with Babylon can be significant from the point of view of representation long after they have been discredited as historical sources, or indeed without ever having pretended to that status in the first place. "The most accurate descriptions of kings and generals, of war treaties and revolutions" may have very little in common with the immediate associations the name of a place or person prompts in the popular or academic imagination. Perhaps there is no clearer example of this than Babylon, but it is far from unique. Perhaps the closest parallel is the case of Venice, whose great cultural impact on the modern European imagination has little to do with historical particulars, save perhaps the life of Casanova.

> As the greatest and richest and most splendid republic in the history of the world, now declined and fallen, Venice became an important, I would say central, site (a topos, a topic) for the European imagination. And more than any other city it is inextricably associated with desire. Desire of Venice, desire for Venice, desire in Venice – this is a crucial force and feature in European literature from Byron to Sartre.
>
> (Tanner 1992: 4)

Much the same could be said of Babylon. For all this, however, the historical accuracy of ancient sources does matter, even when we focus on historiography

and representation. We need to be able to distinguish between observation, hearsay and imagination in Herodotus if we are to understand just what it was about Babylon he wanted to communicate. Assessing the veracity of his statements is not the primary work of this thesis, but disentangling the historiography that leads to more recent representations is, and it is worth noting that new scholarship is currently undoing much of Sayce's original argument – Herodotus's description of Babylon is fast regaining credibility.

Herodotus made no mention of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, a surprising omission with two possible explanations: either Herodotus did not actually visit Babylon, or there were no Hanging Gardens there to describe. Following Sayce, but supported by separate references to the gardens in Berossus (via Josephus[27]), Ctesias (via Diodorus Siculus) and Strabo[32], the consensus has been that Herodotus either did not visit Babylon himself, casting great doubt on the reliability of all aspects of his account, or more specifically did not visit the royal palace (Reade 2000: 198). Recently, however, Dalley (1994) has argued that Herodotus did not mention the gardens because there were none, and that the Hanging Gardens described by other authors were in fact those of Sennacherib at Nineveh. This is not the first interpretation to locate the gardens elsewhere: Budge (1920) suggested the palace of Cyrus at Ecbatana as another potential site based on the account given by Hyginus (*Fabulae*[31] 233) and on Pliny's (*Natural History*[34] XIX. xix. 49) attribution of the gardens to Cyrus. Further, he argued, "It is possible that statements about the garden of Cyrus were transferred to the Hanging Garden, and, as a matter of fact, the accounts of it are so contradictory that they cannot all be referring to the same thing"

(Budge 1920: 297). The debate on the Gardens' location continues. Consideration of the sources in terms of Hanging Gardens at Nineveh has, however, brought to light many problems with Sayce's argument against Herodotus having visited Babylon, discussed by Dalley (2003b). These include the existence of a probable route for the royal road from Sardis to Susa consistent with Herodotus's description, the conclusion drawn by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1987: 69-78) that Xerxes did not completely destroy the temple and statue of Bel in Babylon, making it plausible that Herodotus could have seen both this and the New Year *akitu* festival, late inscriptions contradicting Sayce's assertion that Nineveh was completely deserted in the time of Herodotus, and therefore his informants could not have been local, and that his claim that the Babylonian name for Aphrodite was Mylitta has validity ("At that time [Sayce's, writing in 1883] the Assyrian reading of the name written ^{d}NIN.LÍL had not been established. Now we have found out that it was read Mulissu in Assyrian... Herodotus' Mylitta can be accepted as a genuine piece of information" (Dalley 2003b:172-4)).

The idea that Babylon and Nineveh could have been conflated in the relevant Greek sources is strengthened by the recent work of Marc Van De Mieroop (2004b) who argues that a Mesopotamian literary construct existed that treated the fortunes and histories of Nineveh and Babylon as closely related and inversely proportional, and that the deliberate representation of parallels between the two could have affected their conflation in foreign sources. There is no doubt that such conflation exists: accounts in which the Tigris runs through Babylon and the Euphrates through Nineveh are not unusual, nor a tendency to

refer to the whole of Mesopotamia as Assyria and to treat the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods as a single, continuous empire (in which they may have been more accurate than modern scholarship has yet appreciated (Dalley 2003a)). Later sources also suggest the possibility that Nineveh was sometimes referred to as 'Old Babylon' (Dalley 2003b: 179).

The argument does have some problems: while the engineering works of Sennacherib to water his own spectacular gardens at Nineveh do support these as the more likely candidate, Herodotus may not have seen gardens for another reason. As Dalley points out, had there ever been Hanging Gardens at Babylon they would have disappeared by the time of Herodotus, since the course of the Euphrates changed early in the Persian period and made such a garden impossible. Most importantly, Nineveh is not positively identified as the site in any textual source. As Reade observes, "In fact the classical writers who describe the Hanging Gardens or are quoted by other writers as doing so, whatever the intricacies of textual transmission, are unanimous that what they are attempting to describe are gardens at Babylon" (Reade 2000: 198). In large part, therefore, Dalley's argument depends on the nature and extent of confusion between Babylon and Nineveh in the Greek sources, an important factor in terms of understanding what is represented in later sources, discussed below.

Herodotus's description, of course, covered more than physical monuments. A large part of his account could be termed ethnographic, describing customs and beliefs the writer himself records as a detached observer. The customs he

describes are outlandish and certainly not literally true, but there are some links suggesting their origins either in fact or in Mesopotamian myth and folklore. What is far less clear is Herodotus' purpose in recording them. There is some ambiguity in his assessment of the traditions he describes, making it difficult to be sure whether his approval of them is genuine or sarcastic/satirical. Arieti (1995: 181-187) argues for the latter, while Redfield suggests that a negative approach is the essence of Herodotus' 'ethnographic' writing: "Herodotus notes points which distinguish this people from others, and especially points which a Greek finds odd, and therefore repellently interesting. Oddity is an ethnocentric principle... Woman bites louse is news. Herodotus thus seems not so much the precursor of Malinowski and Boas, as of *Strange as it Seems* and *Believe it or Not*" (Redfield 2002: 24-25).

Herodotus describes as the "most ingenious" of the Babylonian customs the marriage market, a system whereby bride-prices paid for the prettiest wives are used as dowries for the plainest, thus ensuring everyone can get married and at the same time redistributing wealth (a rich man will pay a high bride price while a poor man will seek a high dowry). He comments that "This admirable practice has now fallen into disuse and they have of late years hit upon another scheme, namely the prostitution of all girls of the lower classes to provide some relief from the poverty which followed upon the conquest with its attendant hardship and general ruin" (*Histories* I.196). Arieti sees Herodotus's approval here as sarcastic:

> The arrangement seems to make for a contented community. Yet several elements of humour in the description - the over-poetical term "grew ripe for marriage"... the

> unquestioned ranking by the auctioneer of the girls' relative beauty (can there be no debate about who is more beautiful?), and again Herodotus's breaking into direct quotation of the auctioneer's speech – "Who will take the least money for this one?" – suggest perhaps that Herodotus has his tongue in his cheek. Of course, he may be using a rhetorical device: if this is the *best* custom, how horrible must the other customs be!
>
> (Arieti 1995: 183-184)

The next custom is that of bringing the sick out into the street, where they receive advice from passers-by. Herodotus asserts that there are no doctors in Babylonia, which would presumably have struck a Greek audience as quite backward. He is of course mistaken, and it is surprising that he is able to make this statement with any credibility in the fifth century.

Herodotus next mentions that the Babylonians share with the Egyptians a custom of burying their dead in honey and singing "dirges" for the dead. He then turns to sexual hygiene:

> When a Babylonian has had intercourse with his wife, he sits over incense to fumigate himself, with his wife opposite doing the same, and at daybreak they both wash. Before they have washed they will not touch any household utensils. In this they resemble the Arabians.
>
> (*Histories* I.198)

Neither of these statements seems to carry any obvious slur, unless it is through association with the Egyptians and/or Arabians or, as Redfield's explanation implies, simply through difference to the shared norms of Herodotus's intended audience.

The final Babylonian custom described by Herodotus is ritual prostitution in the temple of Aphrodite, something that every woman is obliged to perform once in her life. Whether he approves of the other traditions he describes or not, Herodotus leaves no room for ambiguity here, describing it as the "one custom amongst these people which is wholly shameful" (*Histories* I.199). He also tells us that there is a similar custom in Cyprus.

Following these claims almost as an afterthought is a strangely plausible and detailed comment on the preparation of fish:

> In addition to the general practices I have mentioned, there is one which is peculiar to three of their clans: these people live entirely on fish which they catch and dry in the sun and then pound in a mortar: the smooth powder is then strained through muslin and eaten either kneaded into cakes or baked like a sort of bread, according to taste.
> (*Histories* I. 200)

Perhaps we are too quick to read this as a snippet of straightforward ethnographic description, included to tease the archaeologists and ancient historians of modernity. Arieti sees the comment as another element in the condemnation of the Babylonian way of life:

> No doubt this last story, combined with the others, will render Herodotus's readers very glad that they are not Babylonians. Indeed, if one can damn by praise then Herodotus has artfully damned Babylon. For all its walled wealth, for all its vastness and luxury, who would choose to live with any of their customs...? Can the historian

> be hinting through all this at the wisdom of being satisfied with a churlish land such as Greece, which, despite its poverty, offered a better life?
>
> (Arieti 1995: 186-187)

Although the moral lesson described is identical to that of the Ottoman Empire in early modern British culture and a degree of circularity is inevitable in the associations Herodotus' description of Babylon provokes in the modern reader, Arieti's argument here does seem credible, and offers a starting point for understanding how Herodotus has come to include these stories in the first place. We have still not established where he obtained his source material for these sections, however, and working on the assumption that he did visit Babylon does not make the task any easier. Nor can mockery or condemnation seriously be considered as motivating Herodotus's description as a whole. We must not forget that he offers his reader/listener a straightforward judgement on Babylon: that "it surpasses in splendour any city in the known world" (Histories I: 178).

Ctesias

The other lengthy Greek description of Babylon is that of Ctesias of Cnidus, a doctor in the Persian court. Although his *Persica* in twenty-three books has not survived, his work does appear in the epitomes of Diodorus of Sicily (*Bibliotheke Historica* II, covering *Persica* I-V/VI) and Photius (*Bibliotheke*[53], codex 72, covering the last seventeen books of the *Persica*). The former includes his description of Babylon. Diodorus cites Ctesias in this description, and is known elsewhere to have borrowed whole passages from Megasthenes[16]

(*Bibliotheke Historica* II: xxxv-xlii) and Agatharkides (*Bibliotheke Historica* III: xviii-xlviii) (Gilmore 1888: v), his goal in writing the *Library of History* being a complete synthesis of available historical knowledge rather than a personal account. Although impossible to confirm, it seems that parts of Ctesias' description of Babylon have been copied verbatim or near verbatim in Diodorus. Current scholarship on Diodorus is in agreement that his account of Babylon uses Ctesias as its main source, although in his introduction to book II of the *Bibliotheke Historica*, Murphy is keen to emphasise that Diodorus does not deserve the charge of "being an uncritical compiler and plagiariser of earlier works to which he himself added nothing of his own, no insights, no grand unifying themes" (Murphy 1989: ix). References to the description of Ctesias largely match with the Diodorus account, although one important possible addition is the Hanging Gardens: Budge (1920: 297) argued that Diodorus did not quote this part of his description from Ctesias (he also doubted the attribution of the first Seven Wonders list to Philo of Byzantium, thinking it much later and making the oldest known mention of the Hanging Gardens the second century BCE Seven Wonders list of Antipater of Sidon[23]), although it is unclear on what basis he makes this claim: references to Ctesias as the authority being used are dotted about the Diodorus text, apparently acting as occasional reminders that Ctesias is the source rather than specific citations.

Despite Ctesias's apparent tendency to doubt Herodotus, much of the content of the Ctesias/Diodorus description is fantastic, and came to be recognised as such.

> In the view of the ancients, Ctesias had two qualities: a style judged by Photius to be 'full of charm' and an overflowing imagination which made him prefer 'stories' to

> history. Although he claimed to have used the royal archives of the Achaemenid dynasty to write his *Persica*, he seems to have delved chiefly into oriental popular tradition, from which he probably drew the story of Semiramis. In any case, several versions of the legend existed.
>
> (Roux 2001: 147)

The *Bibliotheke Historica* II begins with the life of Ninus, the first king of Asia and founder of the city of Ninus (Nineveh), who "set about the task of subduing the nations of Asia, and within a period of seventeen years he became master of them all except the Indians and Bactrians" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. ii. 1).

> Of the lands which lie on the sea and of the others which border on these, Ninus subdued Egypt and Phoenecia, then Coele-Syria, Cilicia, Pamphylia, and Lycia, and also Caria, Phrygia, and Lydia; moreover, he brought under his sway the Troad, Phrygia on the Hellespont, Propontis, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and all the barbarian nations who inhabit the shores of the Pontus as far as the Tanaïs; he also made himself lord of the lands of the Cadusii, Tapyri, Hyrcanii, Drangi, of the Derbici, Carmanii, Choromnaei, and of the Borcanii, and Parthyaei; and he invaded both Persis and Susiana and Caspiana, as it is called, which is entered by exceedingly narrow passes, known for that reason as the Caspian Gates. Many other lesser nations he also brought under his rule, about whom it would be a long task to speak.
>
> (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. ii. 3)

Although much of the Ctesias account has the feel of a story of origin set in a distant and mythical past, this list suggests that we are being told about a Neo-Assyrian king. The list is more representative of the maximum extent of the Achaemenid Empire than of the work of an early conqueror, but even in its smaller early forms (i.e. the Neo-Assyrian expansion) this is an empire

established no earlier than the eighth century BCE. No previous political formation had resembled the list above or indeed approached this size. To take Ctesias's description of the founding of Nineveh, occupied since the seventh millennium BCE, and of the first empire in Asia, which an archaeologist might place in the third millennium BCE, as references to great antiquity is probably a modern error, encouraged by the mythological components in the narrative. Ctesias is highly unlikely to have realised the city's true age, and could plausibly be referring to later imperial building works in any of the three major Assyrian capitals (Nimrud, Nineveh and Dur-Sharrukin). This late and historical start-date for the description raises a tantalising possibility: could Ctesias's Ninus be a specific Assyrian king after all? The list of conquests will not help us: even ignoring the obviously Persian eastern provinces, an empire approximating the description could belong to no king earlier than Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal in the seventh century BC. Ninus's campaign against Bactria seems a potential clue, but is no more plausible than a Babylonian army reaching India (see below). The empire being described to us is actually of more recent date than the fall of Babylon, there was no Assyrian campaign against Bactria, and Ninus remains a mythical king, albeit a much younger one. Where, then, did Ctesias obtain his list of Ninus's conquests? Although the two do not completely tally, my suggestion would be that this is one of several instances of Ctesias borrowing and corrupting a list from Herodotus, in this case his list of the Persian satrapies. In other cases Ctesias seems to have made alterations to suggest he had more information than Herodotus, only for modern historians to verify the original Herodotus list: "A marked feature of Ctesias's account is a tendency to disagree with Herodotus... whether or not he had better information

(for example, in the case of Darius's fellow conspirators against Pseudo-Smerdis, Herodotus has five names right out of six, while Ctesias has only one)" (Stevenson 1997: 2).

Interestingly, the city of Ninus, founded by the king Ninus, is located on the Euphrates, and is the largest city not only of its own time, but of all time (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. iii. 2-4). Still, this is not Babylon, at least in the author's mind, since the founding of this city by Semiramis is subsequently described. Dalley points out that the latter identification is also suspect, since the palace reliefs described in *Bibliotheke Historica* II. viii. 6-7 sound very much like hunting scenes from Assyrian palace reliefs (Dalley 2003b: 183). Koldewey, however, felt that he had identified a very strong match for this description in the "Persian building" at Babylon (Koldewey 1914: 129-31).

Ninus is important as a founder, but Ctesias (or at least Diodorus) devotes much more space to Semiramis. Her birth, life and marriage to Ninus, her succession to the throne upon the death of Ninus, the founding of Babylon, Semiramis' achievements as sole sovereign, the decadence of her descendants, and the fall of Ninus (Nineveh), under Sardanapalus, to Arabaces the Mede are all covered at length.

It is only in Ctesias that we find the mythical life of Semiramis, daughter of Derceto, founder of Babylon and warrior queen. She is accorded no such achievements in Herodotus, who only describes her as "responsible for certain remarkable embankments in the plain outside the city [Babylon], built to control

the river which until then used to flood the whole countryside" (*Histories* I. 185). This description fits well with Strabo's (*Geography* XVI. i. 2) observation of a folk tradition identifying Semiramis as a great builder existing in many locations throughout western Asia. Perhaps Ctesias is conscious of this in placing great emphasis on her – part of his aim certainly seems to have been to discredit and counter the account of Herodotus. In any case the contrast is dramatic. After a birth and early childhood reminiscent of the Moses story his account has Semiramis waging war disguised as a male soldier, and moreover proving herself a great strategist. After succeeding her husband Ninus she goes on to campaign in India. Ctesias also describes her as bloodthirsty, selecting soldiers from her army to sleep with before having them executed the following morning. Finally, she is transformed into a dove. That the Semiramis biography is originally the work of Ctesias is confirmed by Athenagoras:

> For if detestable and god-hated men had the reputation of being gods, and the daughter of Derceto, Semiramis, a lascivious and blood-stained woman, was esteemed a Syrian goddess; and if, on account of Derceto, the Syrians worship doves and Semiramis (for, a thing impossible, a woman was changed into a dove: the story is in Ctesias), what wonder if some should be called gods by their people on the ground of their rule and sovereignty... and others for their strength, as Heracles and Perseus; and others for their art, as Asclepius?
>
> (*Plea for the Christians*[41] XXX)

Semiramis' transformation into a dove was a myth that had survived well enough to require only a casual allusion to be understood in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*[33] (strangely, the seemingly ideal tale is not recounted; the

'Babylonian' story is the romance of Pyramus and Thisbe (*Metamorphoses* IV. 77-79). If Semiramis' deeds do relate to historical events in Mesopotamia, that relationship is tangled and convoluted in the extreme. The name Semiramis is often thought to derive from that of the Assyrian queen Sammuramat (e.g. Leick 1999: 143; Van De Mieroop 2004a: 230). This sounds reasonable enough in itself, but we are left to reconcile a Neo-Assyrian queen with the builder of Babylon. Time and place are wildly out of line with the historical character of Sammuramat, but can be accounted for by phenomena already discussed: the conflation of Nineveh and Babylon and a lack of awareness of the gap in time between the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the foundation of either Nineveh or Babylon. Further, Sammuramat's career was exceptional: "The wife of Shamshi-Adad V, she remained so influential in the reign of her son Adad-ninari III (ruled 810-783) that official inscriptions mentioned the two as acting together (Van De Mieroop 2004a: 230). In an article of 1897, however, W. Robertson Smith made a strong case against the link with Sammuramat, pointing out that the Semitic form of Semiramis, Shĕmīrām, could not have derived from either the Assyrian Sammuramat or the Greek Semiramis, and is instead derived from the name of a deity, in all probability some form of Ishtar/Astarte (: 305). Indeed, Ctesias himself refers to an existing Syrian tradition of deifying Semiramis by worshipping the dove (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xx. 2). The Semiramises of both Herodotus and Ctesias would therefore be goddesses rendered as historical characters, rather than historical characters with divine or mythological embellishments.

The description of Sardanapalus is an early account of the decadence, sloth and luxury of the kings of Assyria, exemplified in the characters of Semiramis' son Ninyas (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxi) and the last of her line, Sardanapalus himself (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxiii). Other rulers are not recorded, save one Teutamos, who sent reinforcements to the Trojans under the command of Memnon. Diodorus/Ctesias comments: "There is no pressing need to transcribe here all the names of these kings, nor the number of years each one reigned, because none of them achieved anything worth remembering" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxii. 1).

The description of Ninyas is intended as an exemplar of Assyrian kingship:

> Ninyas, the son of Ninos and Semiramis, succeeded to the throne, but in no way did he emulate his mother's love of war or boldness of spirit. For in the first place he passed all his time in the palace, unseen by anyone except the concubines and eunuchs who surrounded him. He sought luxury, amusement, and freedom from worry and care, for he held that the object of a prosperous reign is indulgence in every pleasure without restraint.
>
> (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxi. 1-2)

The description of Sardanapalus shows the result of thirty generations of such decadent hedonism. The following passage provided the inspiration for the Sardanapalus familiar in modernity from Byron's (1821) famous play of the same name, and is a strong candidate for the original template for what was to become the trope of Oriental despot:

> Now Sardanapallos was the thirtieth king following Ninos, the founder of the empire. He was the last monarch of the Assyrians and surpassed all his predecessors in luxury and sloth. For besides keeping hidden from everyone outside the palace, he lived the life of a woman. Consorting with his concubines, and also spinning purple thread of the softest wool, he wore the dress of a woman and, by means of white lead and other wiles of the courtesans, he rendered his face and his entire body more delicate than any girl's; he even took pains to have a voice like a woman. In his revels, he not only indulged in those foods and drinks most capable of stimulating continual lust, but he also partook of the carnal delights of a woman as well as those of a man; for he practised sexual promiscuity toward either gender without restraint, caring not a bit for the disgrace attending this behaviour.
>
> (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxiii. 1-2)

Here the fall of the Assyrians was given a moral dimension similar to that of the Old Testament accounts of the punishment of Nineveh and Babylon. Sardanapalus's defeat was not presented as an inevitable punishment, however, although the tendency to decadence was at one point his undoing. Following the successful defence of Ninus (Nineveh) against several attacks Sardanapalus, unaware of the defection to Arabaces of a Bactrian army on its way to support him, simply lets his guard down too soon. When the king had given a feast, distributing good food and wine to his soldiers, "the whole army fell to carousing" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II: xxvi. 4). Arabaces' army takes them by surprise in the night. Retreating into the city, Sardanapalus is powerless as the garrisons surrounding Nineveh, drawn from across the empire, defect one by one to the side of the rebels. Even now, however, the city walls and stores are sufficient to survive a siege for two years. "But in the third year great storms of rain fell without cease, with the result that the Euphrates became swollen,

inundated part of the city, and overturned the wall for twenty stades" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxvii. 1-2). At this point Sardanapalus, realising all was lost, built the famous pyre containing his wealth, his royal robes, his concubines and eunuchs, and "committed himself to the flames along with all of them and the palace itself" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xxvii. 2).

Although this is the key account from which all later descriptions of Sardanapalus are derived, it seems that Ctesias was not the first to write about this character in Greek. A surviving fragment of Hellanicus of Lesbos gives a tantalising hint of oral tradition on Sardanapalus:

> Hellanicus had apparently collected a not always consistent series of stories about an Assyrian king, Sardanapalus (the name is probably a bowdlerized conflation of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal). According to some of the stories Sardanapalus was a great hero; according to others, he was a luxury-loving weakling. In true Ionian rationalizing style, Hellanicus argued for the existence of two Assyrian kings with the same name.
>
> (Kuhrt 1995: 57)

Was the same variety of stories available to Ctesias? It has been mentioned above that he claimed to have accessed Achaemenid royal archives. Although this does at first seem to be a hollow boast, and Roux rightly identifies "oriental popular tradition" (Roux 2001: 147) as the *Persica*'s main source of inspiration (the role of Aramaic oral tradition is discussed below), there are some aspects of the account that would be more readily explained if Ctesias's claim were true. This is an issue worth exploring, because the *Bibliotheke Historica* description

of Sardanapalus quoted above is a very important one from the point of view of historicizing the Orientalist trope of the decadent, amoral tyrant. Despite its age the passage quoted above is recognizable to us as representative of many similar descriptions written in modern Europe, applied to ancient and more recent rulers from Turkey to India and beyond.

There would of course be no Sardanapalus in any Persian account, unless we revert to the once standard assumption that Sardanapalus is simply a Greek rendering of Assurbanipal. This point aside, however, Ctesias' last king of Nineveh shares a great deal with what we know of Achaemenid accounts of the last Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus (555-539 BCE). Before considering this link, however, it is worth reminding ourselves that Ctesias's Sardanapalus is the last king of Assyria, that his city is Ninus (Nineveh), and that it falls to Arabaces the Mede. Ctesias's Assyria, like that of Herodotus, seems to refer to both Assyria and Babylonia; however, whether or not the transition from Neo-Assyrian to Neo-Babylonian Empire mattered to him, we should assume that Ctesias was aware of it, since this is ostensibly the theme of the Sardanapalus passage. The only point of accuracy that raises doubt that what is being described is Nineveh is that the city is wrongly located on the Euphrates. This is not an uncommon, surprising or particularly telling slip, however. It seems reasonable to conclude that the city Ctesias means to describe is Nineveh. With this in mind, we can now turn to the case for believing his claim to have used the Persian royal archives, to any parallels with Persian accounts of Assyria, and to the possibility of a link with Nabonidus.

Although Achaemenid knowledge of Mesopotamia was more intimate than that of the Greek writers, and certainly the distinction between Nineveh and Babylon, Assyria and Babylonia was recognized, the Persian preoccupation was very much with the recently fallen Neo-Babylonian dynasty, and it was Babylon that remained hugely important, while Nineveh, quicker to grow, was also much quicker in its decline. Not that Assyria and its kings are absent from Achaemenid texts, but available sources suggest that the dramatic, morally meaningful place of Ctesias's Sardanapalus is certainly held by Nabonidus:

> Around the fallen monarch there quickly arose an aggregate of legends and historiographic traditions whose study is in some respects as fascinating as that of his reign. The Cyrus Cylinder and the Verse Account, two pieces of propaganda composed under the auspices of Cyrus after his conquest of Babylon, portray Nabonidus as an impious ruler, obsessed with the worship of lunar deities and oppressing his subjects with capricious orders.
>
> (Beaulieu 1995: 977-978)

There are parallels here with Ctesias' description of Sardanapalus in the king's decadence and disregard for the city. We should note, however, that what we have been discussing as an Orientalist motif is here found in Persian descriptions of Babylon. If the link does prove convincing it carries with it the ironic consequence that we can see a key element in the Greek (and by extension modern Western) construction of an Eastern Other (a set of characteristics most commonly applied to Persia) originating in Persian descriptions of an Other in the west.

An important question, as with so much in this study, is that of language and translation. It seems improbable that Ctesias possessed the skills of a classically trained Babylonian scribe, i.e. mastery of Assyrian and Babylonian, the main Akkadian dialects, of Sumerian, and by implication of several enormous cuneiform sign-sets. He could not, for example, have read for himself the *Verse Account of Nabonidus* (a priestly account written in Babylonian emphasizing the king's neglect of his city and people), though indirect access to Babylonian literary traditions is more plausible. Van De Mieroop highlights Babylonian elements in Ctesias's account of the destruction of Nineveh, and judges that "it seems probable that Ktesias used a Babylonian source relating the destruction of Nineveh" (Van De Mieroop 2004b: 4) and that, unbeknownst to Ctesias, this source in turn paralleled and was styled to emphasise retribution for Assyrian accounts of Sennacherib's sack of Babylon in 689 BCE (Van De Mieroop 2004b: 4). These links are convincing, but do not preclude transmission via intermediate oral or even written (Old Persian) sources. That Ctesias might have been able to read Achaemenid records is slightly more plausible than a command of Akkadian and/or Sumerian. The Old Persian script is alphabetic, appearing as forbidding as an Akkadian script, yet based on only a fraction of the number of signs. Further, Old Persian is an Indo-European language, and therefore more closely related to Greek than Semitic languages such as Akkadian, Aramaic and Hebrew. Even this, however, would represent an impressive and unlikely linguistic achievement on the part of Ctesias: the similarity to Greek is only relative, and should not be overemphasised. The importance of Old Persian written sources is, in any case, still overshadowed by other traditions. It seems that spoken Aramaic has been grossly underestimated

as a source for Ctesias, since the classic early analyses of his account pre-dated the discovery that Aramaic, not Old Persian, was the lingua franca of the Achaemenid Empire. This point brings a range of new possibilities into play, the implications of which are outlined by Dalley (2003b). Dalley focuses on wisdom literature in Aramaic and the recitation traditions of the Persian court, arguing that the flexibility of historical setting in Aramaic tales of kings is a strong candidate for much of the geographical and historical confusion in Ctesias's account, giving examples of similar, more securely documented processes of this kind of corruption:

> We now know that Ahiqar the Sage, whose tale is first attested in Aramaic at Elephantine, was a historical character; his friend Nabosumiskin is attested in the time of Sennacherib early in the seventh century BC (Parpola, 1980; Salveson, 1998: 147). The Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon are both named during the course of the story. This is one of several court narratives which was presumably first written during the Late Assyrian period in Aramaic, not long after the events to which it alludes, giving those tricky Assyrian names in an ungarbled form. It has long been observed that the story of Ahiqar is the template for the story of Aesop, whose narrative is set in the court of a Babylonian king... A similar flexibility in historical background is apparent in different parts and versions of the Biblical Book of Esther [21], with variation from a Babylonian ruler to two different Persian kings. In other words, the so-called historical background shifts, even though the core narrative once had a genuinely historical basis.
>
> (Dalley 2003b: 181)

The Semiramis of Ctesias, then, may involve a combination of oral tradition relating to the campaigns of Assyrian kings, a folkloric Shĕmīrām, close or equivalent to the Syrian Astarte, and possibly the historical Assyrian queen

Sammuramat, although only the first two elements are necessary to explain the characteristics of Semiramis in the Ctesias account.

Berossus

It is a great loss for modern knowledge of Babylon that both these extended accounts were written by Greek visitors to Mesopotamia, while an equivalent account by a member of the society they purported to describe has not survived. The historian best placed to preserve a Mesopotamian view of Babylonian history for the Hellenistic world was arguably Berossus. A Babylonian priest, Berossus wrote a history of Babylonia in Greek, known either as *Babyloniaca* or *Chaldaica* (Sack 1991: 34), at a time when the cuneiform script, the Akkadian dialects and Sumerian were all still well known and understood, though Aramaic had apparently long been the lingua franca in most of Western Asia. He was native to the society of which he wrote, and through cuneiform had direct access to far more information than any Greek writer could hope to. Sadly, almost none of the work has survived. Equally frustrating, it appears that Berossus's work did nothing to start a tradition whereby later writers can be seen to have built on his work. There is no equivalent here of Diodorus's and Photius's epitomes of Ctesias (Alexander Polyhistor's[24] first century BCE summary has not survived), nor any known attempt to build on the work by a Babylonian writer, in any language (Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996: 8). Kuhrt argues that the work of Berossus was ultimately forgotten because it did not fit well with the existing dominant account of Mesopotamian history, that of Ctesias:

> Given the established reputation of reliability long enjoyed by Ctesias's version of near eastern history, it seems that this material which fitted Greco-Roman preconceptions and cultural images so much more easily than the uncomfortable Berossus – who omitted such well-known heroes as Ninus and Semiramis from his history – was greatly preferred to investigating the anomolous material presented by the *Babyloniaca*, which could not be slotted into the existing picture of Mesopotamia's past.
>
> (Kuhrt 1995: 63)

The Berossus history is now known only through the citations and quotations of later foreign writers, principally Flavius Josephus and Eusebius of Caesarea (Eusebius Pamphilius)[46].

From the perspective of this study the single most important point to note about Berossus is that his work is eclipsed by the writings of non-Babylonians. After Berossus we are left entirely in the hands of authors foreign to Babylon, and their perception of it in relation to non-Babylonian norms. The difference certainly does matter in terms of writers' access to cuneiform sources, and more intimate knowledge of social, ritual and legal practice, but this is not all. Even the saying 'History is written by the victors,' involves an underestimate of history's significance as a medium through which events are remembered and understood. The writing of history can create victors without battles, as the intellectual history of the modern West demonstrates. From late antiquity until the nineteenth century what distinguished ancient Greece, Rome and Israel from ancient Babylonia, Assyria, Persia and Egypt in European historical thought was the ability to know the former in their own words, and on their own terms.

This, more than any famous noble act, military victory, philosophical, judicial or theological innovation or commonality, has defined and divided Us and Them in modern European historical and religious thought.

Where Berossus's account is remembered at all in classical literature, it is commonly altered and mythologised. Berossus reports the festival of Sakaia, five days during which slaves rule their masters (Stephens and Winkler 1995b: 26). The idea resurfaces in Plutarch (*Erotikos*[36] 753d-e), where Semiramis persuades Ninus to allow her to rule for five days before using her new power to imprison him. Diodorus Siculus does not mention an origin in Berossus, attributing the story to "Athenaeus [[15], of whom nothing else is known] and certain other historians" (*Bibliotheke historica* 2. xx. 3-5). The story is further embroidered in the fifth century CE by Paulus Orosius, whose *Historiae Adversus Paganos*[50] was one of the most widely read and influential historical texts in medieval Europe (Arnaud-Lindet 1990-1991: vii; Brumble 1998: 302). As well as elaborating the account of Semiramis' depravity (*Historiae Adversus Paganos* 1. iv. 6-8), Orosius adds a mystical numerological link with Rome, giving Babylon 1164 years from its re-foundation by Semiramis (following the Genesis destruction of Babel) to its fall to Medes and Rome 1164 years from its foundation to its sack by Alaric (Laistner 1940: 252). This corruption of the source raises questions about the original content of Berossus, particularly with regard to chronology. It seems safe to agree that "of all the lists of neo-Babylonian monarchs that have survived, the arrangement of Berossus most closely corresponds to that of the cuneiform documents" (Sack 1991: 35), but we know his arrangement only through those of Josephus[26] and Eusebius,

whose apparent quotation of the same passage in Berossus differs substantially. Eusebius also preserves the list of Alexander Polyhistor, claiming to use Berossus as his source, but again producing a different account.

Berossus is also one of three key sources for the Hanging Gardens (the others are Ctesias and Strabo, the latter itself seeming relying heavily on the former) from which all the other ancient accounts seem to derive. He apparently attributes their construction to Nebuchadnezzar, and confusion in his account of Babylon and Nineveh is less likely, or at least, to take account of Van De Mieroop's (2004b) point, less likely to be accidental, than in those of Ctesias or Strabo. Despite this it is worth noting Dalley's (Dalley 2003b: 179) argument that Nebuchadnezzar and Sennacherib were confused in later histories. A further doubt is raised by the fact that we know Berossus through Jewish and Christian writers, since in Judeo-Christian writing Nebuchadnezzar became almost a generic 'king of Babylon,' (cf. Al-Biruni, quoted above). Another possibility is that the Eusebius and Josephus accounts introduced the change to harmonise Berossus with other Greek sources. This seems less probable, however, since in this case the logical step would be to follow the dominant account, that of Ctesias, and attribute the gardens to Semiramis.

Novels

Apparently quite distinct from the histories described above, two fragmentary early novels feature Babylon. These are the *Ninus* romance[28] and the *Babyloniaca*[38] of Iamblichos.

The *Ninus* romance is an early first century CE Greek novel known today from four papyrus fragments. The authorship is far uncertain, two possibilities being Chariton, author of *Kallirhoe* and citizen of Aphrodisias, once known by the name of Ninoe (derived from Ninus), and one 'Xenophon of Antioch,' referred to in the *Souda* (a lexical/encyclopaedic volume dating to the tenth century CE) as the author of a *Babyloniaca*, of which, according to this hypothesis, *Ninus* would form a part.

The novel's style and format do not appear to draw on any Mesopotamian source:

> The surviving fragments clearly display the three features that we associate with this type of ancient fiction: fine writing, chaste lovers of high station yearning for marriage, and dramatic adventures. The author avoids hiatus, uses clausulae, and generally stays within the confines of Attic vocabulary.
>
> (Stephens and Winkler 1995b: 23)

Nor does the novel appear to involve any attempt to represent the difference of another culture *per se*. McCall rightly describes the use of names such as Ninus and Semiramis as "merely historical ciphers in a romantic plot which involved a shipwreck, warfare and love scenes" (McCall 1998: 185). *Ninus* does, however, provide us with an interesting case in the use of historical allegory, a topic of great importance to this thesis. The two points of interest here are (a) the apparent selection of some but not all available historical information on the topic, and (b) the role of barbarian 'historical ciphers' such as Ninus and Semiramis in this literary form.

Turning first to the question of available historical information, the probable source for *Ninus* is Ctesias's *Persica*. Although Herodotus's description of Babylon is older, and mentions the names Ninus (as part of a genealogy: "Agron, son of Ninus, grandson of Belus, great-grandson of Alcaeus" (*Histories* I. 7)) and Semiramis (as a notable contributor to Babylon's defences (*Histories* I. 185)), it does not connect the two characters, does not mention Derceto, Semiramis' mother in Ctesias/Diodorus, and apparently in *Ninus*, and does not contain the description of Assyrian military campaigns, known through Diodorus to have been present in Ctesias and the likely inspiration of Ninus's campaign in Armenia in the *Ninus* romance. The hypothesis that Ctesias is a key source for the *Ninus* author seems well founded, allowing for the possibility of an intermediary, either Diodorus or someone who had access to Ctesias when the author of *Ninus* did not, and who told the latter of its contents. To accept that the writer had access to Ctesias's *Persica*, however, is also to accept that they were prepared to disregard and contradict that history as readily as to borrow from it. Most interesting is the character of Ninus' beloved. As the bride-to-be of Ninus and daughter of Derkeia (*Ninus* fragment A. iv. 14-15), from Derceto (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. iv. 9), it is generally considered highly unlikely that the female protagonist of *Ninos* is *not* named Semiramis. If this is correct, however, we must next explain the metamorphosis apparently undergone by Semiramis between her incarnations in the *Persica* and in *Ninus*. In the former we see a fearsome warrior, ruling alone, sleeping with and then executing her soldiers, and leading an ambitious, if ultimately unsuccessful, military expedition to India. In other accounts, including one recorded in

Diodorus (Athenaeus (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. xx. 3); also Plutarch, *Erotikos* 753 d-e) Semiramis does not simply survive Ninus, but tricks him out of his sovereignty. The character in *Ninus*, however, proves too shy to reveal her feelings for Ninus to his mother, while Ninus' parallel speech to Derkeia is a stylistic highlight of the work, "an elaborate display of rhetorical style and compositional finesse" (Stephens and Winkler 1995b: 23). While the novel as we know it is fragmentary, and there is certainly the possibility of Semiramis performing more boldly in lost parts of the work, this incident alone departs completely from the portrait available to the *Ninus* author from historical sources. We can conclude that the writer here consciously decided to make this departure, and therefore considered the representation of an ideal character more important than historical veracity for this work. The Semiramis of *Ninus* may not contribute to the mainstream of European historiography regarding her identity, but she does offer us clarification of the role of ancient Mesopotamia in this context. Here is a barbarian, represented *contra* the available historical information as a Greek ideal, as an ideal of Self. The same is true of Ninus, whose romantic sensitivity and fine Attic oratory are certainly the writer's invention. From this we gain two more important insights. First, the role of idealised lover is open, in this genre at least, to barbarian rulers of the ancient past. Second, there is an understanding that the representation of human identity can and should be adapted to suit a particular literary form, and possibly a consensus that faithfulness to sources was in some cases less important than faithfulness to form. In this case that form is a romance. History is also a literary form, equally defined by its conventions, aims and value system. In this genre, to judge from the work of Herodotus or Ctesias, difference and the exotic

are highly valued – there are ideals for Other as well as Self. Perhaps, therefore, the *Ninus* romance can help us to understand Greek historical accounts of Babylon after all.

The *Babyloniaca* of Iamblichos, preserved through the epitome of the ninth century CE *Bibliotheke* of Photius, bears even less resemblance to the historical portraits of Herodotus, Ctesias/Diodorus and Berossus. As Stephens and Winkler write of Photius's (*Bibliotheke*, codex 94) plot summary:

> If there was any suspicion that the patriarch was capable of pulling our leg, this would be the place to exercise it. According to him, the hero and heroine roam throughout the Near East pursued by two eunuchs whose noses and ears have been cut off. They encounter bees with poisoned honey, a lesbian princess of Egypt, a cannibalistic brigand, look-alike brothers named Tigris and Euphrates who happen to be exact doubles for the hero, and a rather dignified farmer's daughter whom the heroine forces to sleep with an executioner who is really a priest of Aphrodite who helps his son Euphrates break jail by dressing in the farmer's daughter's clothes.
>
> (Stephens and Winkler 1995a: 179)

Iamblichos' identity itself seems to have been partially mythologised; the *Souda* claims he was born a slave, while Photius writes that he had a Babylonian slave for a tutor, and it was from him that Iamblichos originally heard the story of the *Babyloniaca*. Whatever the truth of the matter, the effort in both cases is to give some extra interest to the story through its exotic origin.

Summary and conclusion

There are several sharp contrasts between the biblical and ancient Greek historical traditions with regard to Babylon, not only in specifics but also in the focus of interest and in attitudes toward Mesopotamia. The almost ethnographic passages on Babylonian culture found in the Greek historians have no substantial biblical parallel, while the Old Testament is richer in moral allegory, asserting a 'meaning' for the history of Babylon more forcefully than the Greek writers. This is a difference not of the availability of information, but of purpose and of situation. As Ravn observed,

> The writers of the Old Testament who focussed their attention on Babel, belonged to a nation, conquered by the Babylonian power. Herodotus was a Greek. His nation had waged successful war against the Orient... In Herodotus, however, there is neither indifference nor arrogant scorn. Seemingly as a matter of course, he acknowledges and desires to gain acknowledgment for great and marvellous works, also of Barbarians, and even though found among the enemy, the Persians or their predecessors in Babel.
>
> (Ravn 1942: 9)

Although Herodotus's position was not quite this straightforward (see above), Ravn's point is that he was far better placed to celebrate the wonders of Babylon than the biblical authors, who had every disincentive to do so. This difference in aim and content is important not only for its own sake, but also insofar as it has led to trends in more recent usage of these sources. The Greek writers, from the perspective at least of Enlightenment historical values, appear at an advantage as historians: the *Histories* of Herodotus could be represented as 'disinterested' or even 'objective' when compared with Isaiah (notwithstanding a recognition

of Herodotus's intention to glorify Greek resistance to Persia). Without doubting the literal truth or moral primacy of the Bible, the greater 'ethnographic' value of the Herodotus account, full of cultural details, would be apparent. At this point a degree of circularity should be noted: the impact of Herodotus on the development of the discipline of history in Europe makes the relevance of his approach to more recent European historical thought all but inevitable. To an extent the *Histories* define both the basic goals and the format of European historical writing. It is because of this influence that Herodotus's writing appears 'modern,' meeting the standards of the present better than many other ancient texts. At the same time it is interesting to look at the effort made by Herodotus and Ctesias to define self and other in their work in terms of modern theory on the creation and assertion of cultural identity through difference. The Greek/Barbarian distinction is not only an early precursor of this kind of self/other definition; it is a historically important case in point with a visible legacy and strong parallels in the present. The changing and re-definition of one's own place within versions of that distinction has become the prevailing theme of academic thought on identity, from now classic theory on nationalism and ethnicity to work on the postcolonial condition/s to reassessments of gender and sexuality as aspects of identity. Sensitivity to these factors, a desire to understand their mechanics and their often exaggerated, highly defensive expression in contemporary politics are symptomatic of a world that feels increasingly unstable and is visibly undergoing rapid, unpredictable change. It is usual to see this feeling as an aspect of some very recent phenomena: imperialism, colonialism and decolonization, global migrations, globalization, alienation in the Marxist sense and in terms of a loss

of cultural rights and cultural detachment from the powers that shape our environments and lives. These processes are, at least on their present scale, unique in world history. The feelings they provoke, however, are not equally unique. Current political processes are not the specific causes of a feeling of anxiety and the perception of threats to one's identity. More precisely it is the change these processes imply, and the fact that this change is neither predictable nor easily manageable. Globalization is not, therefore, a pre-condition of the anxiety, but one of many possible causes.

In the case of early Greek historians very similar anxieties and fears were being triggered by a different political phenomenon: the entry of small Greek city-states into the 'world' politics of Asian empires. It is a step from the centre of a small, well understood world to the periphery of a much larger, more dangerous and unknown one (Kuhrt 1995: 57), where the balance of power seems to be overwhelmingly against the Greeks, where the prospect of subjugation by Persia has loomed once and been narrowly avoided, and where there is every reason to fear for the loss of a traditional way of life. It is partly a consequence of later history and Alexander's conquests, partly of the special place later given to Greece in European historical metanarratives and partly a measure of Greek sources on Persia as masterpieces of sheer mouse-that-roared bluster that their threatened position is not immediately apparent to the present-day reader. The political situation is different to that of the present, but the reaction is recognisable: the rise of a concern with self and other, a bullish assertion of the superiority of the self, a display of confidence and an attempt to keep the self at the centre of history. This reaction is a defensive expression of hostility not so

much toward a particular people, but to the unknown, and it is useful to consider the possibility that frequent assertions and assumptions of Greek cultural and moral superiority are not symptoms of the arrogance of power but rather of fear. As the quote above shows, Ravn interpreted the 'balance' of Herodotus in describing the achievements of Greeks and barbarians as the expression of a new and distinctively Greek (read: Western) sense of fair play. There is a case, however, for seeing it as a strategy more consistent with the mocking tone of Aeschylus's *Persians*: as a discourse of confidence for an uncertain world.

Fair chronicling or confidence trick, the result is the same: detail outweighs moral judgement in the Greek sources, while the reverse is true of the biblical descriptions. Further, morality for Jews and Christians is in any case primarily the domain of scripture. This distinction will become increasingly important when examining later representations of Babylon: in the preferential use of Greek and biblical traditions for historical and moral purposes respectively there originates a separation, whereby Greek writers can be seen to have greater influence over academic reconstructions of Babylon and cultural detail in visual representations, and biblical accounts over the moral representation of Babylon, and the selection of subject matter for art and literature. Chapter 5 of this thesis will develop the proposition that, despite the high value placed on the former in recovering knowledge of Babylon and in the development of history's form as an academic discipline, it has ultimately been subservient to the latter, with Greek-sourced detail illustrating primarily biblical ideas about Babylon and its meaning in history in the vast majority of European representations. As Moser

(1998) has demonstrated, close attention to the detail of one epistemology in the production of a representation by no means precludes the effective dominance of another. Moser's study traces the development of an iconography for human origins, revealing a surprising continuity in the face of major paradigm shifts, including the rise of evolutionary theory itself. The relative stability in the iconography of 'primitive' humans is shown to survive and to undermine new understandings of hominid evolution. Technical details receive close attention while important but less tangible factors (such as the facial expressions, social groupings and gaze of figures) are treated far less critically, with the result that dramatic change in scientific theory masks incredible continuity in representation.

It has already been noted (in Chapter 2, above), that the dynamics of change and continuity are key to understanding the historical dimension of representation. One myth to be dispelled, particularly in the case of classical sources, is the notion of change exemplified by medieval decay and modern recovery: the belief that knowledge of Babylon was once full and unambiguous, was gradually forgotten, and was eventually recovered and re-established by modern scholarship. This is a model based on the ideals of Enlightenment science and positivism, not a historical pattern readily observed in practice. To demonstrate this point we can return to our key early Greek accounts of Babylon.

The combined writings of Herodotus, Ctesias and Berossus do not add up to a coherent and consistent account of Babylon or of Babylonia/Assyria. There is very little consistency in terms of historical events, king-lists, details of the

great engineering works or the roles of individual rulers. There is often direct contradiction, and usually very little scope for an ancient reader to verify any given claim. Further, it seems probable that the lost elements of Berossus would throw up even more contradictions than those of which we are already aware. All later writers and artists have been forced to reconcile and homogenise the three very different accounts, or to favour one to the exclusion of the others. Even at this early stage the literary Babylon was plural, inconsistent, and thus resisted being known absolutely. There was no correct single account of Babylon to lose, and nor would there be if we went back further, to the Babylonian sources themselves or even to a set of hypothetical 'perfect' sources, in which residents of Babylon described the city in depth and detail. All description is situated, partial, partisan and reductive. It is never complete, and never absolute. The brief window in the early- to mid-twentieth century when positive empirical knowledge of a single history for Babylon seemed achievable is not the consequence of progressive generations of scholars narrowing down the range of the possible. If anything it is an aberration, a fleeting moment inconsistent with a history of uncertainty and confusion. The moment of certainty is related to the rise of archaeology as an academic discipline and as a science, but to imagine it as real and lasting is to look for stasis where none can exist, blinding us to the flux of knowledge and understanding. One advantage of studying representation is that it leads to a shift of emphasis in research. It requires us to concentrate on the ebb and flow of epistemologies and values. As orthodoxy, knowledge can be temporarily removed from this dynamic process, but its solidity and permanence is illusory and can always be undermined piecemeal and/or in a dramatic paradigm shift.

The model of minor incremental change punctuated by dramatic revolution is the basic thesis of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1970). There is a strong case for this understanding of the history of science, although Bachelard argued that it does not apply equally to the humanities, which develop more incrementally (Young 1990: 49). This thesis works on the proposition that although a recognition of the value of incremental change is important, such a distinction between the sciences and the humanities is artificial. Rather, both processes are at work in both contexts: in the history of science, of the humanities or of any scholarship abrupt revolutionary change is of great importance but does not imply total discontinuity or wholesale destruction.

Chapter 4: The experience of Babylon

The next two chapters deal with medieval and later sources on Babylon, up to the first attempts to investigate the site archaeologically in the nineteenth century. Chapter 4 covers the accounts of those who visited or claimed to have visited Babylon, while chapter 5 deals with the representation of Babylon in European high culture – mainly in fine art and literature – throughout the same period. It is important to be clear about our aims in covering such a range of periods and cultural contexts.

There are several possible approaches, of which analyses of contemporary political events and patterns in art history are perhaps the most obvious. While these both receive some attention, however, the particular focus of this thesis is instead on the history of epistemologies and cosmologies: what becomes, as we move forward in time, the history of science, but which, for our purposes, might best be thought of as a history of knowledge and ideas. For the nineteenth century, to which greater coverage is given, political history and art history do receive more attention. The history of ideas, of worldviews and of ways of knowing the past remains paramount, however. This focus not only allows us to concentrate on some of the most challenging aspects in contextualising our sources, trying to appreciate perceptual differences more fundamental than a particular set of political circumstances, but it also keeps our focus on the central question of this thesis: we are most interested here in *how* people know and understand Babylon.

In taking this approach we are able to turn to several strong traditions of scholarship, the divisions between which affect the historical structure of the thesis. In essence the method is to turn to key scholarship on historical epistemology and broader histories of ideas for medieval, Renaissance and Enlightenment thought, and to look at how the work of specialists in these fields relates to our sources on Babylon. Our sources need not accord with broad claims on the intellectual climate of their production, but in this way we will be able to make some steps toward understanding them on their own terms. If we are to grasp the changes that lead to and constitute the rise of archaeological understandings in later periods this exercise in perspective is essential.

In moving from the biblical and Greco-Roman 'canon' on Babylon into the experiences and accounts of the site's (or rather sites', as will be seen below) more recent European visitors it must be emphasised that changes in the representation of the past are not adequately explained through the addition of small nuggets of extra knowledge or the revision of the details of a stable knowledge base: it has already been stated that this thesis is not intended to chart a gradual accumulation of stable knowledge, and yet it is deceptively easy to describe any history of exploration in these terms. For reasons of style and structure it is almost unavoidable: in covering each source in chronological order we describe what is new and different about it before moving on to the next. The reader learns about the subject source by source as they progress through the text, so that the 'ladder of progress' history of knowledge is mirrored in their own experience of reading. The price of avoiding this problem

entirely would be basic coherence, and so this chapter will retain the chronological ordering of sources. What can change, however, is emphasis: it is possible to treat our sources primarily as re-interpretations and re-evaluations; we will be concerned with visitors' motivations, special concerns, confusions and use of previous accounts. Originality in their contributions remains important, but it enters a body of ideas and understandings that is open to incoherence, contradiction and the selective usage, discard and revival of any of its elements.

Assigning a start-date to the discipline of Mesopotamian archaeology is difficult, with a number of candidates based either on interest in the ancient sites or methods of examining them (Matthews 2003a: 1-4). Indeed, the 'moment' of Robert Koldewey's excavations described at the beginning of this thesis is one such candidate, although perhaps the latest. As Matthews points out, the commonly cited pioneers of the subject are all European travellers and explorers; there is a tendency to overlook the Arabic histories. The influence of these histories on the development of Mesopotamian archaeology is, due to this very oversight, largely indirect, which is to say that the Arabic sources specifically mentioning Babylon were, with occasional exceptions, little-known to the European explorers and early excavators. Indirect, however, is not the same as unimportant: at a grander level connections do exist, and we can cite the influence of medieval Arabic philosophical and scientific texts on the European Renaissance and Enlightenment through translations from Arabic and Greek that became available in western Europe from the thirteenth century onward (Pines 1986 (1974): 354); more specifically we could mention the

impact of historians, and particularly that of Ibn Khaldun, on European philosophy of history (Mahdi 1957: 7-9) and the intellectual climate which ultimately produced archaeology and archaeologists in both the Enlightenment and modern senses.

In terms of specific historical knowledge, there is in the preservation, analysis and transmission of Greek historical sources a history that deserves far more attention than it has yet received, the particular importance of which to European knowledge of Mesopotamia is noted by Masry (1981: 223). At the same time the development of Arabic history and historiography relating to Mesopotamia offers opportunities for comparison with the European experience, and the material available to a researcher with sufficient ability in classical Arabic is almost certainly greater than we currently realize; Okasha el-Daly's (2005) work on ancient Egypt in medieval Arabic sources should be particularly instructive here, presenting as it does major new sources for an area that has received even more academic attention than Mesopotamia. These themes, as well as the remarkable separation apparently pertaining between Arab and European intellectual life in the early modern period and beyond, lead us neatly to the second constituent group the list of travellers and explorers excludes: participants in the European cultural discourse who, throughout the entire period discussed in this chapter, were battling over and ultimately revolutionising the epistemologies and criteria for knowledge underpinning the aims of learning and the definition of knowledge about the past. This thesis would have some trouble covering ten centuries of intellectual history per se, but one of its key aims is to chart the development of archaeology in

Mesopotamia within this much larger cultural context. To this end we will discuss the contributions of the travellers and explorers themselves in this chapter, before widening our focus to examine other contemporary ways of knowing and representing Babylon in Chapter 5.

Early travellers' accounts

The shrinking and final disappearance of Babylon as a settlement is only hinted at in the available historical sources. The rise of Baghdad does not rapidly eclipse Arabian and Persian references to Babylon and Seleucia, and Ibn Hauqal[55] refers to a small village of Babel as late as the tenth century (Hilprecht 1904: 13). By the time of our earliest medieval travellers' accounts, however, this has apparently disappeared. In any case, biblical accounts led medieval travellers to expect a deserted ruin.

Benjamin of Tudela

A key medieval source for European knowledge of Asia is the itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin ben Jonah of Tudela, a Spanish merchant whose travels, begun around 1160, probably lasted until 1173. His *Itinerary*[64], unpublished until 1543 (McCall 1998: 186), and known to us only in abridged form, covers a vast area, including most major cities and holy places of Western Asia and extending as far east as China, its primary aim to record the situation of Jews across the world. His account of Babylon (in this case Birs Nimrud, ancient Borsippa, probably following the same identification in the Talmud (Lundquist 1995: 69)), records that local people were afraid to venture near the site itself, as it

was infested with snakes and scorpions (*Itinerary* 102). While it may be partly rooted in observation, this is a reference to biblical accounts of Babylon's desolation in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and one often repeated in the accounts of other travellers, discussed below. Benjamin also describes an ancient but functioning synagogue, and the site of the burning fiery furnace of Daniel 3:

> Near at hand, within a distance of a mile, there dwell 3,000 Israelites who pray in the Synagogue of the Pavilion of Daniel, which is ancient, and was erected by Daniel. It is built of hewn stones and bricks. Between the Synagogue and the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar is the furnace into which were thrown Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and the site of it lies in a valley known unto all.
>
> (*Itinerary* 102)

There is some doubt as to whether Benjamin of Tudela actually visited Babylon, or indeed ever travelled as far to the east as the scope of his account implies. Introducing his 1841 translation of the *Itinerary*, Asher argues that the account is effectively in two parts:

> One very peculiar feature of the work, by which its contents are divided into *'what he saw'* and *'what he heard,'* as the preface [written later, apparently by a different author] has it, requires particular notice.
>
> (Asher 1841: xi; emphasis in original)

Rabbi Benjamin mentions the names of the principal Jewish leaders and Elders in towns until he gets to Baghdad, after which these are almost entirely absent. According to Asher, this is where "what he saw" ends and "what he heard" begins. If this is strictly true it would seem that he saw Mosul and Nineveh

(Mosul's principals are listed, and it appears in the itinerary before Baghdad), but not Babylon, Hillah or the Tower of Babel. The *Itinerary* describes Babylon first, then Hillah, which it lists as being five miles away, and finally the Tower of Babel, four miles from Hillah, making Birs Nimrud the likeliest candidate for Benjamin's Tower (Adler 1907: 43; Fig. 4.1). This conflicts with the histories of archaeology (except Rogers (1900: 84), followed by King (1919: 14)), which tend to assume that he visited everywhere described. It does accord with the route Benjamin, like most travellers coming from the west, would have taken into Iraq, however (the alternative is to cross the desert, either directly to Mesopotamia or to the western shore of the Persian Gulf, and from here sail on to Basra – much the same limitation that dictated the patterns of expansion of ancient Mesopotamian empires), and there were good reasons to stop at Baghdad:

> Bagdad, at his time the seat of the Prince of the captivity [a Jewish leader claiming descent from King David, whose description forms a large part of Rabbi Benjamin's section on Baghdad], must have attracted numerous Jewish pilgrims from all regions, and beyond doubt was the fittest place for gathering those notices of the Jews and of trade in different parts of the world, the collecting of which was the aim of R. Benjamin's labours.
>
> (Asher 1841: xii)

In this connection it is important to note that attempts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to suggest Rabbi Benjamin (whose account was seen as "an attempt to aggrandize the real number and to represent under bland colours the state of the Jews in remote countries" (Asher 1841: xiii)) never left Tudela were

part of a broader anti-Semitic position which Asher is quick to discredit and dissociate from his own claim.

In terms of Rabbi Benjamin's experiences in Iraq, it is worth noting Signer's comment on his written Hebrew:

> A reading of the Hebrew text of the *Itinerary* reveals more about Benjamin. He writes in a rather formal medieval Hebrew. His Hebrew is suffused with Arabic forms. This would certainly indicate that Benjamin knew Arabic. It was probably his mother tongue. Arabic gave Benjamin the linguistic key to the world he set out to explore in Asia and Africa. Benjamin's knowledge of Arabic also opens up a path toward a deeper understanding of his intellectual milieu.
>
> (Signer 1983: 15)

Marco Polo

Some travellers identify Baghdad as modern Babylon, or New Babylon. A sentence in Marco Polo gives the impression of assumed continuity between Baghdad and Babylon. He gives a description "of the great city of Baldach or Bagadet, anciently called Babylon." Marco Polo's late-thirteenth century account of the city confirms that this is Baghdad:

> Baldach is a large city, heretofore the residence of the Khalif or pontiff of all the Saracens, as the pope is of all Christians. A great river flows through the midst of it, by means of which the merchants transport their goods to and from the sea of India...
>
> ...In Baldach there is a manufacture of silks wrought with gold, and also of damasks, as well as of velvets ornamented with the figures of birds and beasts. Almost all the

> pearls brought to Europe from India have undergone the process of boring, at this place. The Mahometan law is here regularly studied, as are also magic, physics, astronomy, geomancy, and physiognomy. It is the noblest and most extensive city to be found in this part of the world.
>
> (*Travels* VII)

Others realised that Baghdad was distinct from the site of Babylon, but still referred to the former as New Babylon (John Eldred[140]) or simply Babylon (Anthony Sherley[164], Johann Schiltberger). Given the apparent tendency of Greco-Roman writers to refer to Nineveh as Babylon or Old Babylon discussed above, we can appreciate that the identification of Babylon with multiple sites involves more than the misidentification of ruins such as Birs Nimrud (Fig. 4.2) and ᶜAqar Quf (Fig. 4.3).

St Odoric

Friar Odoric of Pordenone travelled from Venice to China's Pacific coast in the early fourteenth century. The journey was so remarkable that Odoric, who was eventually beatified, gained a reputation for having had divine protection, and stories of miracles associated with him began circulating during his own lifetime (Chiesa 2002: 6). His account[74] includes many strange and fantastic peoples, but much of the geography is sound and he is generally agreed to have actually made the journey he described, probably by means of dictation on his return. The description of his travels was in any case the by-product rather than the goal of his journey:

> Odoric's motives for the voyage seem to have been exclusively missionary in nature: "I crossed the sea and visited the countries of the unbelievers in order to win some harvest of souls," says Odoric in the preface to the *Relatio*. And at no point in the account did he act in the capacity of ambassador or diplomat. The goal of gaining souls may not have been preordained, and this could explain some of the apparent contradiction in the itinerary that followed; the travel schedule might have been modified according to needs and circumstances. Odoric is the only religious traveller to the East whose voyage is recorded, yet it does not appear that he was sent by an official organisation.
>
> (Chiesa 2002: 13-14)

His description of Iraq is minimal, but does include the Tower of Babel, which he describes as four days' journey from Baghdad. He passed it, according to his own account, on the way northwest from Yazd, although his translators and editors have suggested that this may be a mistake on his part, the route being in effect a massive detour westward; the alternative suggested by Chiesa is that he came into "Chaldea" via "Soldania" (Soltaniyeh). The distance from Baghdad makes Birs Nimrud a more plausible candidate than ᶜAqar Quf for the site Odoric believed (and one must presume he was informed by a local source) to be the Tower of Babel. He makes no comment on the site to give us any clue. Although he talks about Baghdad, Odoric never mentions the city by name, either as Baghdad or Babylon. He describes "Chaldea," meaning either the vicinity of Baghdad or Iraq more generally, as "a great kingdom," and notes that its people have "a language of their own." He also describes reversal of gender norms for dress:

> The men are comely, but the women in sooth of an ill favor. The men indeed go smartly dressed and decked as our women go here, and on their heads they wear a kind of fillet of gold and pearls; whilst the women have nothing on them but a miserable shift reaching to the knees, and with sleeves so long and wide that they sweep the ground. And they go barefoot with drawers hanging about their feet, and their hair neither plaited nor braided, but in complete dishevelment; and as here among us the men go first and the women follow, so there the women have to go before the men.
>
> (*Relatio* Ch. 4)

Whether this is an echo of Greek interpretations of the *Sakaia* festival or of the story of Semiramis' accession to power by tricking Ninus out of his throne is not clear, however, as there is no specific reference to these stories. One suspects not, if purely on the basis that Odoric is not otherwise given to such literary flourishes. In this case, however, it is a puzzling inclusion, since it does not seem to accord with any known tradition in Baghdad either.

Johann Schiltberger

In 1396, at only fifteen years old, Johann Schiltberger of Bavaria was captured at the battle of Nicopolis. He spent the next five years as a prisoner of the sultan Bajazet, and in 1402 both slave and captor fell into the hands of Timour. Schiltberger provides a mixture of first- and second-hand accounts of Timour's campaigns, and travelled with his army and/or court to Siberia, Central Asia, Egypt, Arabia (where he is claimed by his modern editors, P. Bruun and J. Buchan Telfer, to have been the first Christian visitor to Mecca and Medina (Telfer 1879: xxvii)), and of course Mesopotamia. On his eventual escape and return to Bavaria, where he arrived in 1427, his narrative was recorded. As

extraordinary as any aspect of his story is the testament this account offers to his powers of memory. Schiltberger was apparently illiterate, and "The various incidents of his career in the East are recounted without method, and were evidently related just as the recollection of them occurred to him" (Telfer 1879: xviii-xix), yet the content of his account, or at least that part of it based on first-hand experience, is remarkably ungarbled and factually accurate. Schiltberger's illiteracy seems almost an advantage in this respect, since he is not subject to the burden of reconciling his own experience with that of his predecessors. Babylon, strangely, is the great exception to this general rule. Telfer (1879: xix) believes that Schiltberger's relation of the dimensions of the walls of Babylon, clearly from Herodotus, is the one and only indication of a literary source in the account. This may be going too far, since even within the account of Babylon itself (*Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger*, Chapter 34) there is the almost obligatory reference to Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah: "none can get there because of the dragons and serpents, and other hurtful reptiles, of which there are many in the said desert." This is far from clear-cut, however: an intimate knowledge of the Old Testament is itself no indicator of literacy in fifteenth century Europe, and while it does seem strange that he chooses the same biblical reference as his literate forebears, it is just conceivable that the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy may have struck Schiltberger in such a way as to cause him to include the added detail in the same manner. We could even entertain the idea that this is straightforward observation, with no intentional reference to a biblical source; after all, finding 'hurtful reptiles' in the desert is not so far-fetched, and is an experience common to many travellers in this

chapter. In terms of the specific reference, however, the coincidence would be remarkable.

Schiltberger also refers to Baghdad as Babylon, and describes Timour's conquest of the city in 1401 (to which he was not a first-hand witness). Schiltberger's testimony often emphasises the violence and cruelty of Timour, and here he describes the total destruction of Baghdad:

> Tämerlin besieged it for a whole month, during which time he undermined the walls, took the city and burnt it. Then he had the earth ploughed and barley planted there, because he had sworn that he would destroy the city, so that nobody should know whether there had been houses or no.
>
> (*Bondage and Travels* Ch. 15)

There is something strange in this, since Schiltberger must have been aware that, extreme though the sacking was, this total destruction did not come to pass. In chapter 34, his account of "The Tower of Babilonie that is of such great height" includes a description of Baghdad (this time called "New Babilonie" to distinguish it from the "great Babylon"), and there is no reason to think that he did not visit the city. Perhaps the wording here is careful: "he had sworn that he would" does not guarantee that he was successful. It could even be considered that, given the ambiguity of other geographical information Schiltberger provides – that Great and New Babilonie are separated by a river called the Schatt (i..e. the Tigris) – New Babilonie is not Baghdad at all, although there is no other obvious candidate to match the account (Schiltberger describes a grand city, in which Persian as well as Arabic is spoken and with an enormous

hunting ground or menagerie) and no tradition of calling another city in the area Babylon. More probably Schiltberger was setting down second-hand information uncritically and without giving any indication of his view as to its veracity, beyond the act of recording it at all.

The Tower of Babel Schiltberger finds is Birs Nimrud, confirmed both by his description of distances, which Bruun demonstrated are correct for Birs Nimrud (Bruun 1879: 167), and perhaps more interestingly in a name we encounter for the first time here: "Marburtirudt," which Bruun reasonably suggests stands for "Marbout Nimroud," or prison of Nimrud (although Modern Standard Arabic ربط (*rabaṭ*), 'to bind,' and مربوط (*marbūṭ*) 'bound,' suggest bonds of Nimrud as an alternative translation – cf. Dante[72] on Nimrod in chains, Chapter 5 this thesis). Schiltberger understands the whole name to refer to the king who built the tower, and is therefore nearer than he apparently realises to the biblical view that the builder was Nimrud.

In these early travellers' accounts of Babylon we can see in a relatively unambiguous form the strong effect of writers' expectations and religious convictions on personal observation. Biblical references framed as observation abound in most accounts, the most common motif being the claim that the ruins of Babylon are filled with snakes and other dangerous creatures, found in Benjamin of Tudela (*Itinerary* 102), Friar Odoric (*Relatio* Ch. 4), Johann Schiltberger (*Bondage and Travels* Ch. 34) Leonhard Rauwolf[132] (1583: 204) and Anthony Sherley (1825: 46), and based on various translations of Jeremiah and Isaiah's prophetic descriptions of the city's fate (a version of the Jeremiah

passage is quoted in Chapter 3, this thesis). One measure of this influence is the fourteenth century account of Sir John Mandeville, in which both the author and the journey described are probably fictitious. Even if the narrative is the personal account of a real journey made by a historical John Mandeville, as Milton (2001 (1996)) has recently attempted to prove, it was nonetheless constructed almost entirely by compiling and embellishing existing literature. Despite this limitation Mandeville, whose real identity remains unknown, gives an account comparable in detail and content to that of Rabbi Benjamin, whose Hebrew description he could not have read, mainly by describing the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Whether or not readers believed the more fantastic elements of the description (in the tradition of Pliny's monstrous races, see below), "*Mandeville's Travels* was certainly the most famous travel text, and generally one of the most popular works of prose of late medieval Europe" (Korte 2000: 23-24).

Travellers in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

Leonard Rauwolf

Leonard Rauwolf, a Bavarian physician, travelled 1573-6, and came to Baghdad in October 1574. His account of the journey was first published in 1583. He describes Babylon, "die alte Hauptstatt in Chaldæa" lying to the east of "Elugo" (Falluja) (Rauwolf 1583: 203). He found it,

> ...ganß zerfallen / unnd unbewohnet ligen bleiben: hinder dem in der nehe der Babylonische hohe Thurn gestanden / den die Kinder *Noah* (welche erstlich dise landschafft nach der Sündflut bewohnet) bis an Himmel zuerbawen angefangen.

> Completely destroyed/fallen / and uninhabited it lies still; near behind it stands the high Tower of Babylon / that the children of Noah (who first settled in this land after the great flood) tried to build up to Heaven.
>
> (Rauwolf 1583: 204; author's translation)

Hilprecht (1904: 14) argues convincingly that Rauwolf's city of Babylon must have been the remains of ancient canals he saw on his journey to Baghdad, and that his Tower of Babel must be ᶜAqar Quf.

John Eldred

The Englishman John Eldred was in southern Iraq in 1583, and gives a short account of Babylon. The location he gives is at first a little puzzling:

> In this short desert, between the Euphrates and Tigris, formerly stood the great and mighty city of ancient Babylon, many of the old ruins of which are easily to be seen by day-light, as I, John Eldred, have often beheld at my good leisure, having made three several journeys between Aleppo and New Babylon.
>
> (Eldred 1903 (1592): 298)

To travel from Aleppo to Baghdad means going south-east along the Euphrates, coming close to the Tigris only as one approaches Baghdad (Fig. 4.4). Budge describes Eldred as coming to ᶜAqar Quf "when he was coming down the Tigris from Môsul" (Budge 1925: 60). This is not what Eldred wrote, but Budge may have had good reason to assume that the route was a desert crossing to Mosul followed by a journey down the Tigris. Hilprecht has it that Eldred, like

Rauwolf and Balbi, saw ᶜAqar Quf while travelling east from Falluja to Baghdad, and that like them he mistook the ruins of ancient canals for the city of Babylon (Hilprecht 1904: 14). This explanation seems to accord better with Eldred's description, the "short desert" presumably being the stretch between Falluja and Baghdad. The description is a little vague, but is at least compatible with ᶜAqar Quf:

> Here also are yet standing the ruins of the old Tower of Babel, which, being upon a plain ground, seemeth afar very great; but the nearer you come to it, the lesser and lesser it appeareth. Sundry times I have gone thither to see it, and found the remnants yet standing, above a quarter of a mile in compass, and almost as high as the stone work of Paul's steeple in London; but it showeth much bigger. The bricks remaining of this most ancient monument be half a yard thick, and three quarters of a yard long; being dried in the sun only: and between every course of bricks, there lieth a course of mats, made of canes, which remain sound and not perished, as though they had been laid within one year.
>
> (Eldred 1903: 299)

The layers of matting Eldred describes are still visible at ᶜAqar Quf (Matthews Pers. Comm.; Fig. 4.3). The comparison is picturesque, although it should be remembered that Eldred was writing well before the great fire of London in 1666, and hence before Christopher Wren had designed the present St Paul's cathedral, built 1675-1710.

Eldred's immediate successors give similar accounts. Anthony Sherley (Manwaring, Sherley and Others 1825) and John Cartwright[151] (1633) give the same attribution. Jean Baptiste Tavernier[178], visiting in 1652, also believed

[c]Aqar Quf to be the Tower of Babel, although he notes that local tradition has it that the tower was built by an Arab Prince to protect his subjects in time of war (Tavernier 1676-1677: 214). In common with other travellers he gives detail of the bricks and reed matting used, presumably, though there is no explicit statement to this effect, because of their correspondence with the description of Herodotus.

Pietro Della Valle

A significant shift of emphasis comes in the visit of Pietro Della Valle[174], whose role as a methodological precursor to archaeological study of the area has been emphasised by Blunt (1953) and Invernizzi (2000). He is best known for what, in hindsight, seems an important 'first':

> He is alleged to have been the first person to copy a cuneiform inscription, something he indeed did in Persepolis on October 13th-14th 1621. This claim, however, requires certain qualifications, for his copy is not entirely correct, and a cuneiform line was copied in Persepolis a short time earlier by Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa, ambassador of Spain in Isfahan from 1617 to 1624, whom Della Valle himself met at the court of Shah Abbas. Nevertheless, it is a fact that, while the report published by the Spanish aristocrat had no particularly strong influence on seventeenth-century European culture, the wider diffusion and uninterrupted success of Pietro Della Valle's letters over the following centuries give special importance to the copy of the Persepolitan inscription he published.
>
> (Invernizzi 2000: 643-644)

He also correctly deduced that the inscription was to be read from left to right (Budge 1925: 16). This act of recording, however, is not so much an isolated step in itself as a reflection of the extent to and manner in which Pietro Della Valle's approach to the ancient sites he visited during his travels differed from those of his predecessors and even contemporaries. Della Valle copies, sketches, explores, and even,

> ...probing the remains with his pick at different points, endeavours to get a clear idea of the structure of the unknown monument standing in front of him. In the curiosity of knowledge, we are here confronted with what is apparently the earliest example of an excavation sounding in Mesopotamia, and certainly the earliest recorded such sounding.
>
> (Invernizzi 2000: 648)

This rather stretches the definition of 'excavation sounding,' but the point Invernizzi rightly emphasises is the distinctly empiricist and, significantly from an archaeological point of view, physical character of Della Valle's attempt to find out about the site. The most remarkable products of Pietro Della Valle's visit to Babylon are visual. Among his retinue was a Flemish artist, who produced sketches[175] (Fig. 4.5) that were intended to form the basis for a future painting (Invernizzi 2000: 646). Although the painting seems never to have been made, and the sketches themselves have not survived, they were the source for three images in Athanasius Kircher's *Turris Babel*[179] (Kircher 1679), where their naturalism contrasts sharply with the fantastic images making up the bulk of the illustration. They are recognisable depictions of Tell Babil (Fig. 4.6),

ruined and formless mounds totally unlike any previous European image of Babylon.

Kircher's work also contributed to Della Valle's future influence in another way: he translated much of the account of Babylon from Della Valle's letters into Latin (the primary sources are in Italian, letters to Della Valle's friend Mario Schipano (Della Valle 1843 (1650-1663)), thereby making his description accessible to a larger European readership. The significance of Kircher's work as a whole will be returned to in Chapter 5.

The changing role of observation

It would not be quite correct to say that Della Valle worked from observation where others did not – the value of seeing something for oneself is implicit in any travel account – but we could perhaps say that his observation was critical in a way that that of Rauwolff or of Sherley was not. These travellers, to read their accounts today, give the impression of trusting the Bible far more than their own eyes. Quite probably they would both agree with this verdict and see this trust as an important aspect of piety. Although stereotypes of medieval thought as static and credulous adherence to dogma have deservedly received criticism, and writers today are in any case wary of such sweeping generalisation, there is still something to be learned here from the characterisation of C. S. Lewis:

> They [medieval writers and thinkers] are bookish. They find it very hard to believe that anything an old *auctour* has said is simply untrue. And they inherit a very

> heterogenous collection of books... Obviously their *auctours* will contradict one another. They will seem to do so even more if you ignore the distinction of kinds and take your science impartially from the poets and the philosophers; and this the medievals very often did in fact though they would have been well able to point out, in theory, that poets feigned. If, under these conditions, one has also a great reluctance flatly to disbelieve anything in a book, then here there is obviously both an urgent need and a glorious opportunity for sorting out and tidying up.
>
> (Lewis 1964: 11)

This, according to Lewis, was exactly what medieval scholars wanted, since "At his most characteristic, medieval man was not a dreamer nor a wanderer. He was an organiser, a codifier, a builder of systems" (Lewis 1964: 10). To this extent he denies his subject the creativity of other ages, and this claim we can treat with the reasonable scepticism of critics no longer convinced by the conceptions of human progress that underwrite such dismissals. On the other hand the emphasis Lewis places on the perceived importance of classification and the resolution of all these *auctours* or canonical (in the secular sense) sources deserves our consideration. *The Discarded Image* set out to help modern readers appreciate medieval and Renaissance perspectives, and in the case of our sources for these periods the view above does help to do this.

The modern practice – perhaps through a combination of the historical experience of later New World navigators and the drive for empirical research which has grown ever stronger in the centuries following the Enlightenment – is to identify the work of travellers to distant lands as discovery of the new, to base their value upon this, and thus to be left if anything a little disappointed by

the repeated confirmations of biblical or classical sources we find in earlier travel accounts. At worst, this can leave the reader revelling too much in the curios: for 'originality' in the account of Friar Odoric, for example, one might turn to his fantastic descriptions of monstrous races far to the east, dismissing the more practical and indeed accurate geographical content of his account. What if, to adopt the refraction Lewis suggests, we instead identify the work of these accounts as clarification, and the value as the individual's contribution to that self-referentially complete and harmonised Model of the Universe (to use Lewis's term)? The first step in doing so would be to recognise the strong intellectual imperative for such a project:

> [N]o proper understanding of medieval literature is possible without a good knowledge of the Christian categories of thought and beliefs. Yet medieval man was also the heir of late classical antiquity and of barbarian cultures, and their categories of thought, their literary genres, their points of view, were also part of his heritage. He was well aware of a secular tradition which had not been completely transformed by Christianity.
>
> (Bloomfield 1958: 75)

Suddenly another kind of contribution to knowledge is apparent, and one that puts the works of the medieval travellers in a better light. The wonderful paradox at the heart of this shift to a slightly alien perspective is that it now becomes easier for us to identify commonalities between medieval and Renaissance efforts and later studies of Babylon. The need to place what one learns within a Model of the Universe, for example, is not itself a goal whose pursuit disappears or even fades; it is the method of that pursuit that changes,

and so we can understand something about the transition from a medieval web of great but finite complexity to a present-day pursuit of simplicity epitomised in the elegance of contemporary characterisations of physical law, reduced to a handful of forces from whose interaction the variety and complexity of our universe is now believed to derive. This is not so far as it appears from changes in the way we know the human past – for social and historical scientists too the later twentieth century was a time of model-building and the search for underlying principles, albeit that this search met with much less success than that in the physical sciences. Again, what differentiates this effort from the 'medieval' work of codification and classification is that between the careful study of existing sources and the more-or-less empirical acquisition of new data with a view to the establishment and refinement of consistent rules and principles. To return briefly to the accounts of monstrous races, these too can be seen as part of the incorporation of knowledge into a grand framework. They actually originate in classical geographies, notably the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (VII: 2), and we could most accurately say that it is not their existence but their – to the modern reader – increasingly awkward inclusion next to a more prosaic observed world that is distinctively 'medieval' (Korte 2000: 22). A comparable problem – and solution – can be found in the medieval treatment of hagiography and the miracles of the saints. Kendall takes the example of the Venerable Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in which,

> We see a double image. There is the dispassionate, scientific observer, meticulously sifting the evidence of the past, and there is also the child of the Dark Ages, embracing the most superstitious elements of popular legend.
>
> (Kendall 1978: 145)

Arguing that the crucial tool in Bede's resolution of such diverse material is expert rhetoric, Kendall draws a conclusion as to the nature of Bede's achievement that represents a meaningful goal for medieval travellers as much as historians:

> [Readers] may be conscious of the juxtaposition of what we can loosely call historical and hagiographical narrative. But once the juxtaposition is seen as an accurate reflection of the discontinuity of the sixth age [i.e. "the time of grace extending from the advent of Christ to the second coming and the last judgement"], conditioned by preexisting narrative conventions, the magnitude of Bede's achievement becomes apparent. The *History* is a finally unified version of the totality of man's experience from the mundane to the miraculous, in and beyond time.
>
> (Kendall 1978: 146-147)

Even putting aside the religious interpretation of this "discontinuity," the historian can appreciate the need to preserve all sorts of sources against a background of great philosophical and theological flux and tension. As with Pliny's monstrous races, however, the preservation of knowledge in new context is a form of change in itself.

Maintaining this spirit of change amid continuity, we can say that Pietro Della Valle does indeed represent a significant contrast to his predecessors. He questioned and tested, and in order to do so he had to have a certain faith in his own observations. He was, of course, a Christian, and the difference in his approach can hardly be seen as a consciously impious or heretical act, but it is

there, nonetheless, and in its very method it challenges a certain theocratic kind of knowledge. The truth of scripture and the canon, it implies, is not precisely literal and not, as a historical document, complete. The possibility of separating mythos and logos in conceptions of the truth of scripture originates in acts of this kind. This can hardly have been his own view of the event, but when we see this conflict of authority manifest itself explicitly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we will be reminded of the figure of Della Valle, tentatively exploring the foundations of the Tower of Babel.

Early eighteenth-century attempts to establish the site of Babylon

The existence of two distinct sites for the Tower of Babel may have spurred some of the empirical research and detailed comparison with ancient sources which emerge in the seventeenth-century accounts:

> Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina di Sienna [158], procurator general of the Carmelite monks, who sailed up the Euphrates forty years later, like Pietro della Valle, even made an attempt at vindicating the local tradition by arguing that the place is situated on the banks of the Euphrates, that the surrounding districts are fertile, that for many miles the land is covered with the ruins of magnificent buildings, and above all, that there still exist the remains of the Tower of Babel, "which to this day is called Nimrod's tower," - referring to Birs (Nimrûd) on the western side of the Euphrates.
>
> (Hilprecht 1904: 17)

The Dominican Pére Emmanuel de St Albert[152] makes explicit mention of two possible sites for Babylon, both of which he visited in 1700, and of which neither is ᶜAqar Quf (Budge 1925: 61). Rather he identifies a problem which

would puzzle visitors until the time of Koldewey: the apparently competing sites of Birs Nimrud, which he describes as lying in Arabia, and the ruins on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, i.e. the actual remains of central Babylon. Jean Otter[191], visiting in May 1743, apparently had no confusion regarding the site, insofar as it was in the general area of Hillah, and was aware of a surviving local tradition of calling all or part of it Babel or Babil. Interestingly Otter cites not other recent travellers but rather the "Géographe Turc" (Munejjimbashi/Ahmed ibn Lutfullah, author of an unpublished universal history[146], d.1702) and the Koranic reference to Harut and Marut (Otter 1768: 2: 209-211).

Niebuhr and Beauchamp

The late eighteenth century is notable for two particularly influential visitors' accounts of Babylon: those of Carsten Niebuhr and the Abbé de Beauchamp. Writing his history of the field in 1904, Hilprecht saw their accounts as an important transition point. In introducing the two he drew a firm distinction between their approaches and those of their predecessors:

> Travellers, whose education was limited, and missionaries who viewed those ruins chiefly from a religious standpoint, have had their say. Let us now briefly discuss the views of such visitors who took a strictly scientific interest in the ruins of Babylon.
> (Hilprecht 1904: 18)

On the other hand, he was more inclined to group them with these earlier accounts than with the excavators and philologists of the nineteenth century:

> There were other travellers at the close of the eighteenth century who, like Edw. Ives [195] and the French physician G. A. Olivier [197], also visited the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, occasionally even contributing a few details to our previous knowledge. But they did not alter the general conception derived from the work of their predecessors, especially Niebuhr and Beauchamp. The first period of Assyrian and Babylonian exploration had come to an end. Merchants and adventurers, missionaries and scholars had equally contributed their share to awakening Western Europe from its long lethargy by again vividly directing the attention of the learned and religious classes to the two great centres of civilisation in the ancient East [Nineveh and Babylon].
>
> (Hilprecht 1904: 21-22)

In terms of the present thesis this judgement adds interest to the format and content of the two accounts. Turning first to the better known of these, the work of Carsten Niebuhr is famous among all students of ancient Western Asia, and more often cited as a progressive catalyst for more modern approaches to the study of ancient monuments than as the end of an era. Niebuhr travelled in Asia between 1761 and 1768, and visited the area of Babylon in 1765. The account of Babylon forms part of his *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern*[196] (1774). Lundquist (1995: 70) describes Niebuhr as a polymath in the Renaissance tradition, and his achievements certainly seem remarkable - the *Reisebeschreibung* is far more than a travel narrative, and his grasp of Arabic alone is something to mark him out from most travellers since Rabbi Benjamin. Not the least of Niebuhr's abilities, however, was a more prosaic one: the careful attention to detail he brought to his recording. This proved of immense value both to the early excavators benefiting from his maps and plans, and perhaps even more to the decipherers of cuneiform scripts: the

inscriptions Niebuhr copied at Persepolis were later used by Georg Grotefend to make the first steps in the decipherment of Old Persian, a success which in turn would contribute to the unlocking of the more complex syllabic cuneiform scripts (although Henry Rawlinson unknowingly duplicated the result in 1835 (Meyers 1997: 39)).

Beauchamp's[200] achievements are perhaps most important as an antecedent to those of Botta and Oppert in the nineteenth century, and also, suggests Chevalier, to those of Rich, Layard and Rawlinson.

> La littérature assyriologique semble s'accorder sur un nom, celui d'un Français, l'abbé Joseph de Beauchamp, vicaire général à Bagdad, à qui revient le mérite d'avoir éveillé en France la curiosité du monde scientifique, par un mémoire publié en décembre 1790 dans le *Journal des Savants*, sur les ruines sassanides de Ctésiphon et les vestiges de Babylone. De même en Angleterre, ce mémoire, traduit dans l'*European Magazine* dès 1792, attire l'attention de la Compagnie des Indes qui charge ses agents à Bagdad et Bassorah d'acheter des antiquités et de les faire parvenir à Londres.
>
> Assyriological literature seems based on one name, that of the French Abbé Joseph de Beauchamp, vicaire général ('curate') in Baghdad, to whom can be attributed the merit of awakening in France the curiosity of the scientific world, through a memoir published in December 1790 in the *Journal des Savants*, on the Sassanian ruins of Ctesiphon and the remains of Babylon. Similarly in England this memoir, translated in the *European Magazine* in 1792, attracted the attention of the East India Company, who charged agents in Baghdad and Basra with acquiring antiquities and arranging their passage to London.
>
> (Chevalier 2002: 46-47; author's translation)

Beauchamp took care to confirm Niebuhr's measurements, including making his own calculations of Babylon's latitude (Beauchamp 1790-1800: 13). This detail, it should be noted, has recently taken on new significance: the medieval astronomer Azarqiel of Toledo gives the latitude of "Old Babylon," thus confirming that Nineveh has been known by this name (Dalley 2003b: 179). In terms of the measurement's meaning in the time of Beauchamp and Niebuhr, it is significant in the sense that their recording techniques are representative of a broader change: as numbers of travellers and navigators increased, and as a greater and more permanent European imperial presence was being established in many parts of the world, European mapping of the world was becoming more accurate and more complete. The ability to put a precise location, and a location that can be described in quantitative terms relative to a position in Europe, on something as exotic as Babylon, changes the relationship of the visitor to the location. It is no longer a vague area on the edge of the known geography, but a part of it that submits to its rules as easily as anything else. As such edges of known geography became less common, so they became increasingly interesting, even fetishised (McClintock 1995: 3-4). In the nineteenth-century the tension between discovery and the exhaustion of these boundaries is eloquently expressed in the fame and fascination of Henry Morton Stanley and David Livingstone's meeting on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Tellingly, Stanley himself emphasises the fact that the last certain location he had for Livingstone was 10° S on the Eastern coast of the continent, and that with Livingstone having been fifty-eight months in the interior this knowledge would be of no help (Stanley 1998 (1886):42). Africa, in other words, was still beyond such control. Geographical expertise is a form of possession and of control, and

by enlarging the known, controlled world it equally shrank the unknown. The role of mystery and mythology in understandings of far away places such as Babylon was being gradually eroded.

The nineteenth century

Claudius Rich

Beauchamp's influence with regard to the East India Company's policy does help to explain the subsequent work of Claudius Rich, although it could be argued that the politics of European imperial competition within the Ottoman Empire would have forced both England and France to engage in Mesopotamia by the 1840s regardless of academic precedent. By this period the processes that would ultimately lead to the delineation of the present-day Middle East, from the formation of new boundaries and borders to the construction of a concept of 'Middle East' itself (Adelson 1995), were well underway, and would effect lasting transformations in Europe, as well as western Asia and northern Africa.

> Europe's colonial past is not merely an epoch of overseas power that is now decisively over. It is the beginning of an irreversible global transformation which remains an intrinsic part of 'European experience', and is part of the reason that Europe has become what it is today. It is not possible for Europe to be represented without evoking this history, the way in which its active power has continually constructed its own exclusive boundary - and transgressed it.
>
> (Asad 2000: 17)

Claudius Rich was East India Company Resident in Baghdad 1808-1821, and visited Babylon in 1811. This visit, in the form of Rich's *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*[211], first published in the *Mines de l'Orient* in 1811, but subsequently reproduced as a separate book (Rich 1815), was to provide the most detailed report yet to reach Europe on the site. Not only is Rich's observation thorough, but his knowledge of earlier sources on Babylon – given that many of them were not available to him while he was writing in Baghdad – is impressively wide-ranging. These qualities lead to an account that at once privileges empirical observation and centres on older sources, whether these be biblical, classical or the reports of recent travellers, and thus acts as a review of these sources based on Rich's own experience. Thanks partly to the author's own ability in Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Hebrew, the *Memoir* is also an interesting, if not very complimentary, source on local knowledge and stories relating to various parts of the site.

Rich's account includes the journey from Baghdad to Hillah, detailing route and distances. This journey includes a dried up canal known as the "Naher Malcha, or *fluvius regius*, the work, it is said, of Nebuchadnezzar" (Rich 1815: 5). In describing the area of Babylon itself, Rich works south to north across the mounds, describing each one in some detail. He also provides a series of views of the mounds on two of his three plates (the third is a now quite famous plan of Babylon, to which his description constantly refers (Fig. 4.7)). In the course of the description he resolves a number of points arising from earlier travellers' accounts. This is not incidental, but at times feels like the structuring principle and purpose of his description; in this it is distinguished from all other travel

accounts referred to here with the exception of the far later *By Nile and Tigris* (Budge 1920). Rich felt strongly that there was a need to improve on what he saw as the incomplete and misleading sources available. To demonstrate his point (and rather conveniently from our perspective), the author introduces his account by describing explicitly his own preconceptions regarding Babylon:

> I have frequently had occasion to remark the inadequacy of general descriptions to convey an accurate idea of persons or places. I found this particularly exemplified in the present instance. From the accounts of modern travellers, I had expected to have found on the site of Babylon more, and less, than I actually did. Less, because I could have formed no conception of the prodigious extent of the whole ruins, or of the size, solidity, and perfect state, of some of the parts of them; and more, because I thought that I should have distinguished some traces, however imperfect, of many of the principal structures of Babylon. I imagined, I should have said: "Here were the walls, and such must have been the extent of the area. There stood the palace, and this most assuredly was the tower of Belus." – I was completely deceived: instead of a few insulated mounds, I found the whole face of the country covered with vestiges of building, in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh, in others merely of a vast succession of mounds of rubbish of such indeterminate figures, variety and extent, as to involve the person who should have formed any theory in inextricable confusion.
>
> (Rich 1815: 1-2)

Rich therefore sets out to describe the site in the greatest possible detail, his attention to which provides him with the tools to unpick the claims of earlier travellers to an impressive extent. For example, he seems to be the first writer to have realised that many of the ruins described by even his immediate predecessors were in fact canals (Rich 1815: 15). He deduces this partly from

references to foliage, of which there is none on the site itself (he also postulates that this is probably due to the rubbish contained in the mounds being unsuitable soil for plants) but the Kasr tree (of which more below), which he describes as a badly damaged but still leaf-producing evergreen (Rich 1815: 26).

While his stated aim is to confine himself almost entirely to on-the-spot description of the site, Rich does in fact devote considerable attention to questions of correspondence with the claims of classical authors and with the confirmation of Old Testament prophecy. Throughout, he relies on and refers to the *Geographical System of Herodotus Examined and Explained* of Rennel (1800), and subsequent English visitors such as Keppel[223] (1827), Buckingham[221] (1827) and Ker Porter[217] (1821) tended to use Rennel's textual perspective and Rich's observations in conjunction. Nor does Rich express any great doubt in the authority of classical authors, much less the claims of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The crucial point here is that at this stage there is no significant conflict with these sources even for an author placing a very high value on empirical observation. Far from it: the confusion and desolation Rich finds fit very well with Babylon's prophesied destruction, even to the point of the ruins being home to "many dens of wild beasts" (Rich 1815: 29). Confirmations of detail from classical accounts are also forthcoming: "From the yielding nature of the soil I can readily conceive the ease with which Cyrus dug a trench round the city, sufficient to contain the river" (Rich 1815: 17, referring to Xenophon: *Cyropaedia*[14] VII)

A final merit of Rich's account, no doubt enhanced by the author's long residence in Iraq and linguistic ability, is its incidental coverage of local and non-European knowledge and ideas relating to the site, a subject that is only now reappearing in archaeological discourse (Gazin-Schwartz 1999). A memorable conversation occurs on top of the mound Rich calls Mujelibè:

> The summit is covered with heaps of rubbish, in digging into some of which, layers of broken burnt brick cemented with mortar are discovered, and whole bricks with inscriptions on them are here and there found: the whole is covered with innumerable fragments of pottery, brick, bitumen, pebbles, vitrified brick or scoria, and even shells, bits of glass, and mother of pearl. On asking a Turk how he imagined these latter substances were brought there, he replied, without the least hesitation, "By the deluge." (Rich 1815: 29)

Mujelibè is Tell Babil, also called Maqlub, although some travellers, as Reade (1999: 57) notes, refer to the Kasr area by the same names. Koldewey knows the same tell by the name "Mudshallibeh," which he understands to mean "the overturned" (Koldewey 1914: 160). The Arabic word for Mujelibè/ Mudshallibeh seems most likely to be مجلبة (*mujaliba*) from جلب (*jalaba*) 'tumult, turmoil.'

Rich also gives a full account of the legend attaching to the single, ancient tree on the Kasr, which he tells us is locally known as *Athelè*. According to local tradition, this tree alone was spared in the destruction of Babylon, "that it might afford Ali a convenient place to tie up his horse after the battle of Hellah [Hillah]!" (Rich 1815: 26). Hereafter this story appears several more times in

the travel accounts, discussed by Reade (2000: 196). Although *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon* gives the impression that its existence was already well known, it seems to be the first published report of its existence (at least as a single tree). One curious gap, in terms of local knowledge, is Rich's apparent failure to note the likelihood that the word برس (*birs*, as in Birs Nimrud) was a derivation of Arabic برج (*burj*), or tower. More curious still, since he seems to have consulted Iraqi scholars on its meaning. In a footnote he writes,

> The etymology of the word *Birs* (برس) would furnish a curious subject for those who are fond of such discussion. It appears not to be Arabic, as it has no meaning which relates to this subject in that language, nor can the most learned persons here [in Baghdad, where *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon* was written], assign any reason for its being applied to this ruin.
>
> (Rich 1815: 34)

The account provoked considerable debate between the author and other scholars, most importantly Rennel, and lead Rich to re-visit the site and publish a *Second Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*[214] (1818). The posthumous *Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon*[230] (Rich 1839) is a compilation of these accounts, the original journal of his expedition to Babylon from which the *Memoir* was written, a reprint of an article by Rennel on Rich's 1815 account of the topography of Babylon, and the account of an 1821 journey from Basra to Shiraz and Persepolis.

The massive Assyrian excavation projects of the mid-nineteenth century have been given excellent historical coverage, particularly in Larsen's *The Conquest*

of Assyria (1996), and the early chapters of Nicole Chevalier's *La Recherche Archéologique Française au Moyen-Orient* (2002), whose subject matter it will only be possible to sketch here. The less successful ventures of excavators in southern Iraq in the mid- to late nineteenth century have received less attention, but deserve more emphasis than usual in this thesis, since they will help to explain both the opportunity of excavating Babylon for the first time in 1898, and the importance of Robert Koldewey's methods in doing so. Before this, however, we must briefly revisit the discoveries of Paul-Émile Botta and Austen Henry Layard, and with them the entry of ancient Mesopotamia into modern imperial competition.

Botta, Layard and Large-Scale Excavation

The diplomat with antiquarian interests, Rich, is followed in 1842 by a diplomat appointed specifically because of them, Paul Émile Botta as French Consul in Mosul (Meyers 1997: 38), at the suggestion of Jules Mohl. Botta was originally on the right path to excavate Nineveh, following Rich's correct attribution of the city to the Nebi Yunus and Kuyunjik mounds. Botta planned at first to work on Nebi Yunus, but was forced to bow to strong local opposition due to the shrine on top of that mound (Nebi Yunus means 'tomb of Jonah.') The shrine still stands today, and an illustration contemporary with Botta's work can be found in Layard (1849a: 131; Fig. 4.8). Botta dug at Kuyunjik from December 1842 to May 1843 (Chevalier 2002: 21). Before reaching the palaces of Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal that lay beneath, however, he was led away by discoveries of carved stone at Khorsabad. This mound quickly yielded spectacular architectural discoveries. Encountering a vast and ornately

decorated palace Botta revised his view, henceforth believing Khorsabad to be the site of Nineveh. Texts were later to reveal the site as ancient Dur-Sharrukin, an important but short-lived Assyrian capital, and the palace Botta found as that of Sargon II, founder of that city.

By contrast with the governmental decision to place Botta in Mosul Layard's, and therefore Britain's entry into competition for the spectacular discoveries and museum pieces of Assyria was more a matter of accident than design. Despite the precedent set by Rich, who had given finds from the area to the British Museum and whose antiquarian work had attracted public attention, the Museum itself displayed its then customary attitude to non-classical antiquity, giving neither money nor further thought to Mesopotamia. Layard himself was supposed to be on his way to Ceylon for the purpose of studying law. *Nineveh and its Remains*, however, suggests a personality that would, notwithstanding the author's genuine and long-term interest in the ancient past of the region, have found plenty of other occupation *en route* even if excavating tells had played no part in it. The book is more travel narrative than antiquarian study, and its author took as great an interest in modern Iraq as in ancient Mesopotamia. Nor does it shy away from contemporary political commentary; Reade (1998: 915) accurately describes the book as "one of the most damning accounts of Ottoman imperial administration ever written." Like Botta, Layard was initially unable to excavate at Nebi Yunus, nor even at Kuyunjik, the reason being that both tells were visible from Mosul, lying just across the Tigris. He initially attempted to hide his work from local authorities, but in light of its eventual scale this seems a little ridiculous. The situation was certainly

embarrassing for Sir Stratford Canning, who later had to obtain a retroactive permission on Layard's behalf.

> This was not India, and while Britain was a major imperial power, so was the Ottoman Empire. The Assyrian sculptures were obtained through diplomatic channels, by the British ambassador [Canning, in Constantinople] approaching the Ottoman sultan, hat in hand, asking if Britain might have any pieces that the sultan did not need.
>
> (Russell 1997: 120)

Nonetheless it was this attempt by a foreign visitor to employ large numbers of men in digging colossal statues out of a nearby tell and yet somehow maintain a low profile that led Layard to dig at Nimrud, ancient Kalhu (N.B.: Nimrud, a former Assyrian capital, is not related to Birs Nimrud, near Babylon). Here, excavating what turned out to be the palace of Ashurnasirpal II, Layard became convinced that this, rather than Khorsabad or the Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus mounds, was the site of biblical Nineveh. As a result Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains* (1849a) and Botta's *Monuments de Ninive* (1849) describe Kalhu and Dur-Sharrukin respectively, although Layard did return to Nineveh itself, hence the enormous collections of reliefs from its northern and south-western palaces (of Ashurbanipal and Sennacherib respectively) now held in the British Museum alongside those of Ashurnasirpal II from Nimrud. Beyond this, however, their publications were very different in nature. Frederick Bohrer (1989; 1992; 1998; 2003) has discussed the different aims and methods of dissemination employed in England and France in some detail, but to summarize the most important differences we can look specifically at these two publications of 1849 by Layard and Botta themselves. Layard's is a popular

book – exceptionally popular, in fact (Bohrer 1992: 85) – and its commercial success was furthered both by extensive coverage of the Assyrian discoveries as they reached London in the *Illustrated London News*, and by the publication of an even cheaper abridgement of Layard's already relatively affordable work, *A Popular Account of the Discoveries at Nineveh* (Layard 1852). In France, meanwhile, *Monuments de Ninive* represented the other extreme. Botta's work was published in five large volumes, lavishly illustrated and produced, and absolutely beyond the reach of all but the very richest. Next to the mass-production of *Nineveh and its Remains*, *Monuments de Ninive* looks like a Renaissance masterpiece, produced under royal patronage and for the particular benefit of the patron. This, in fact, is not so far from the truth of the matter. *Monuments de Ninive* was indeed produced in tiny numbers and mainly for patrons of the work. It could more fairly be compared to Layard's own *The Monuments of Nineveh* (Layard 1849b) and *Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh* (Layard 1853a), expensive large-format works again produced in small numbers and for a very exclusive readership. Unlike these, however, it was the principal means of disseminating information about the discoveries, there being no perceived popular appetite for or benefit in a publication equivalent to *Nineveh and its Remains*. Had such a book been written it remains possible that this assumption would have been borne out, since Layard's sales were built on the foundation of regular coverage of Assyrian antiquities in the *Illustrated London News*, whose weekly circulation of c.100,000 (which in the mid-nineteenth century would imply a much higher actual readership) dwarfed the sales of even very successful books of the time (Phillips 2004: 109). This publication did have a Parisian opposite number in *l'Illustration*, but the latter

did not really parallel the remarkable enthusiasm for the Assyrian discoveries shown by the *Illustrated London News*.

Partly in consequence of this difference in publication formats, Layard presents himself in a manner far more consistent with other travellers and travel writers, particularly the other Englishmen who had visited Mesopotamia earlier in the nineteenth century. Botta seems more in tune with a newer savant tradition, for which the supremely lavish 23 volumes of the *Description de l'Égypte* provided the publication model (Jomard 1809-1828). Whether such a difference can be ascribed to national scholarly traditions is far from clear, however, since they can be explained at least as well through the different levels of state interest and support the two excavators received. Whatever the case, *Nineveh and its Remains* reads as a story of adventure and discovery, and finds its closest parallels in other travel accounts and in works of travel fiction. H. Rider Haggard is a good comparator; certainly there is a vast gulf between the genre in which Layard writes and the more reflective styles of the great Victorian writers of adventurous travel, Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad. These authors, famed for their very different perceptions of the British Empire, its role and its future, can be seen to share a crucial feature when compared with *King Solomon's Mines*, or even *Nineveh and its Remains*: the former analyse and attempt to place in moral context relationships between European imperial powers and the wider world that the latter take for granted. This is the field in which the style of *Nineveh and its Remains* comes to make the most sense, far more so than in comparison with a lavish, visually stunning and above all expensive production such as *Monuments de Ninive*, or a book-as-excavation-

report such as Koldewey was later to produce with *Wiedererstehendes Babylon*[268] (1913; see Chapter 6, this thesis), and that as such it can be seen as a 'low,' or at least not particularly innovative or conceptually ambitious example of its genre. It is an interesting book not because of the style, the views of its author or even the detail of the excavations themselves, which are really only sketched, but because the subject-matter so dramatically reinforces an idea of world history that in any case was pervasive in mid-nineteenth century England. The rise and fall of empires, of 'civilisations' as writers until very recently have put it, was a subject normally studied through ancient authors, where the classical idea of a cyclical pattern leading ultimately to the pinnacle of Rome (cf. Richard Hingley's *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, which discusses both this point (Hingley 2000: 156) and the role of ancient Rome in British imperial identity more generally) dominated ideas of historical development. These models explained Britain's place at the pinnacle of world civilisation, and its ability to wield power over the once mighty Rome, Greece, Egypt and Mesopotamia. They were seen to receive substantial material proof in discoveries such as Layard's. They also prophesied decline and fall of even the mightiest, as Shelley points out in *Ozymandius*, but like their Roman predecessors most British imperialists solved this problem through the crude device of seeing their creation, for no better reason than self-interest, as the end and perfection of the process (Hingley 2000).

Books were not the only product of the European encounter with Assyria. As has already been mentioned the *Illustrated London News* gave extensive coverage to the subject. What it covered specifically, however, was the parade

of Iraqi antiquities entering the British Museum at this time. Similarly in the Louvre the scale of the acquisitions and expense of their transport are as shocking by present-day standards as the legal ease with which this was achieved or the extent of the physical destruction involved. Since this may be imagined to consist simply in 'unscientific' techniques of excavation we should pause a moment to consider what was actually required. The 'unscientific' technique in question is tunnelling. The method simply involves finding the edge of a relief-decorated wall and tunnelling alongside it, removing reliefs along the way. Layard, Botta, Rassam and others excavated miles of stone bas-reliefs in this way, but Assyrian reliefs are nonetheless some of the most expensive items involved in the illicit antiquities trade. (The discovery by John Malcolm Russell of half a relief panel that had earlier been mistaken for a cast of itself in an English public school led to a very rare legal sale. The panel fetched £7.7 million at auction, making it the most expensive antiquity ever legally sold (Russell 1997: 192).) For shipping it was necessary to minimize weight, and therefore the thick panels were cut down to only a couple of inches in thickness. Unsurprisingly accidental breakage occurred in the process of shipping, as well as some spectacular losses: the French expedition of Fulgence Fresnel, Felix Thomas and Jules Oppert lost an entire shipment of their Babylonian finds in the Tigris in 1855 (Oppert 1863[238]: I). Large pieces, in particular the winged bulls and lions, were deliberately cut into pieces for transport – the repairs made on their reassembly are still visible. Travelling with the Royal Mail, Assyrian antiquities bound for London went first down the Tigris on rafts, then taken on to Bombay, where at least one large shipment was temporarily unpacked for display at the docks. Loss and damage is to be

assumed under these circumstances, and in some ways it is the amount of material that nonetheless made it to London that surprises. It was material shipped to European museums that would survive, however. Exposed to wind-blown dust, huge temperature changes and moisture, surfaces were quickly damaged, removing the usually very shallow reliefs and inscriptions. Exposure to the elements has remained a hugely destructive factor in Iraq. In the present we can cite the problems of looted clay tablets, which, without care in excavation and conservation, rapidly deteriorate (Dalley 2004), and the removal, again through looting in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war, of metal roofing installed to protect exposed parts of the Assyrian palace sites (Al-Gailani-Werr, Pers. Comm.). The museums themselves took quite different attitudes to the Assyrian material. The French project was supported by the government throughout, whereas available records suggest the British Museum's position lay somewhere between grudging acceptance of and outright hostility to Layard's finds, which the Trustees considered aesthetically inferior to the classical sculpture they saw as the Museum's main business. Egyptian material generally suffered the same fate, and the second-class status of both sets of antiquities is reflected in the sums the Trustees were willing to spend on them, in sharp contrast with Greco-Roman antiquities (Moser 2006 (In Press)).

Layard and Botta established a pattern of British and French excavations throughout Iraq that would last for the rest of the nineteenth century. Tunnelling in mounds and large local workforces were as typical of their successors as of Layard and Botta themselves. Their work was physically destructive, far more

so than the more tentative explorations of the late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century. It was particularly damaging in southern Iraq, where the inability to trace mud-brick architecture meant that excavations frequently dug through buildings. Excavations were performed at Babil in 1864 by Arnold Kemball[240] (1864-1865), and between 1878 and 1882 at nearby Birs Nimrud by Hormuzd Rassam, Layard's colleague, friend, and successor as agent of the British Museum in Iraq (Rassam 1897[257]). It is fortunate that the centre of the city was not subject to greater destruction through excavation. At the same time as causing permanent damage to sites, however, the excavations of the mid-late nineteenth century drove the development of Mesopotamian archaeology and Assyriology. If the methods of excavation and level of analysis seem coarse, it should be remembered that nothing was known about the material being excavated – its nature and the questions that might be asked of it had yet to be established. To use the terms of present-day research, the scales of sampling and analysis employed by excavators in mid-late nineteenth century Mesopotamia were appropriate to their research questions. The same might be said of the recording: the value of smaller, less impressive finds was largely unknown, since there was no apparent reason to imagine that it would eventually be possible to reconstruct past ways of life at the level of detail to which these finds contribute. The failure to trace mud-brick architecture would be seen as a failing in the case of Babylon's monumental architecture, but not necessarily in the case of ordinary dwellings, whose perceived value for nation or academy was limited. Nonetheless, it is a mistake to think of early excavators as uninterested in past ways of life, and their actions as simply mercenary. Perhaps a more accurate judgement would be that the capacity of archaeology

as a tool for reconstructing aspects of everyday life was not yet fully appreciated. For all the problems in method, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that these excavations lay at the heart of a new and vibrant field of scholarship, and that knowledge of the Mesopotamian past was increasing in giant steps because of them.

Conclusion

The most important trend in the accounts described above is a gradual, qualified, but definite shift toward a particular empiricism in which the perspective of the present-day, on-the-spot observer is privileged. This empiricism so underpins present-day attitudes to research that its absence, or rather weakness in relation to competing epistemologies, is difficult to imagine. It is equally present in the competing bases for human knowledge postulated by Descartes and Vico (cf. Chapter 2). Its absence leaves a very different, and at root more complex, set of mechanisms for verifying and establishing knowledge, in which cross-referencing and synthesising are of the highest importance. Attempting to appreciate this perspective is central to understanding the early visitors' accounts of Babylon, and the transition to a more familiar Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment humanist empiricism is equally important in understanding our later sources in terms of what they add and change.

In the accounts of visitors to Babylon there are also some continuities and consistencies that are as remarkable as any change. The ubiquity of references to wild beasts, meaning the fulfilment of Isaiah and Jeremiah, is one such case;

a fascination with the construction methods described by Herodotus another. Reinforcement and stability make knowledge, whether in the form of unquestioned assumptions or of the expectations one brings to one's investigations. Travel accounts form a part of this process, but by no means the whole. The next chapter will analyse a broader set of sources on Babylon, and the impact of their form and content on the study, representation and consumption of the Mesopotamian past.

Chapter 5: The idea of Babylon

Già s'inchinava ad abbracciar li piedi
al mio dottor, ma el li disse: «Frate,
non far, ché tu se' ombra e ombra vedi».
Ed ei surgendo: «Or puoi la quantitate
comprender de l'amor ch'a te mi scalda,
quand' io dismento nostra vanitate,
trattando l'ombre come cosa salda».

Already was he bending over to
Embrace my master's feet. 'Brother,' said he,
'Don't, for you're a shade, and shade you view.
Standing, he said, 'You know now the degree
Of love that warms me to you when it brings
Me to forget our insubstantiality:
I treat our shadows still as solid things.'

Statius, author of the *Thebaid*, meets Virgil in Purgatory
(*Purgatorio* XXI. 130-136)

This chapter covers a quite different set of sources on and approaches to the Mesopotamian past. This difference, however, is not to be overestimated. The distinction between historical, allegorical and fantastic understandings of Babylon is often a difficult one to make, for the authors of our primary sources and for ourselves. The works of painters and writers are evidently fictions and hybrids, but the love that warms us to them brings us to forget their insubstantiality, in Dante's phrase. Perhaps it is for fear of such entanglements

that archaeology has privileged the tradition least overtly prone to such complexities. The sources covered in Chapter 4 are representative of what has been seen as the key tradition in Mesopotamian archaeology's development: travellers and explorers, antiquaries, treasure-hunters and eventually – when is a matter of personal preference, for the division is conceived as a question more of degree than of type – archaeologists. Direct, on-the-spot observation unites the group, and it is this element that we normally seek in looking for antecedents to archaeological work. Recent history, moreover, reinforces this perspective:

> What British archaeology achieved overseas, indeed, was largely responsible for narrowing the meaning of the word "archaeology". In Crete, in Egypt, in Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean, the great discoveries which caught the attention of the public were made as the result of digging. Sir Leonard Woolley, Sir Arthur Evans, Sir Max Mallowan and others earned their knighthoods and made their reputations by their skill and good fortune in finding wonderful things underneath vast quantities of sand and earth. They were the excavator-knights, the finders of buried treasure, who fired the imagination of their fellow countrymen and brought archaeology to the attention of the popular press and therefore of the man in the street. Since the 1920s archaeology, for most people, has been practically a synonym for excavation.
>
> (Hudson 1981: 2)

As we have now seen, the visitors to Babylon do form some kind of continuum and their personal experiences and different approaches have affected the development of new ways of understanding the past; nonetheless they mislead us. When we focus, as to an extent we must, on Benjamin of Tudela, Pietro

Della Valle or Claudius Rich, we create two problems. First, we are more likely at any given point to be looking at the manifestation rather than the process of epistemological change, since the explanations for the different approaches visitors take are if anything more likely to be found in contemporary European cultural circumstances than the details of their journeys or even their phenomenal experiences of Babylon itself. Second, in starting from the position of grouping sources by an apparent similarity in method – i.e. actually visiting and exploring ancient sites – it is very difficult not to let this similarity pass for a similarity in motivation, worldview and understanding of the formation and significance of ancient places. The separation of these visitors from the other forms of knowledge about Babylon of their time makes proto-archaeologists of them. The result of this can be seen wherever the history of archaeology is presented as an incremental process of methodological improvement, with excavators simply becoming more meticulous over time. A good Mesopotamian example would be the excavation techniques of Layard and Koldewey. When comparing the methods of the two Leonard Cottrell talks of Koldewey's applying "the touch of the watch-maker, rather than the blacksmith" (Cottrell 1959 (1957): 40), and for archaeologists there is a feeling of great relief that Koldewey did not repeat the mistakes of his predecessors and dig straight through the architecture of the city (cf. Chapter 6). The praise that Koldewey has received as an excavator is both understandable and justified, but the apparent incremental improvement in method blinds us to the fact that Koldewey and Layard worked with different goals in mind – another sense in which Cottrell's analogy of the watchmaker and the blacksmith is apt. This is an important point: it greatly affects the meaning of the history of archaeology,

since if changing aims and reasons for excavating are ignored there is no longer a coherent argument underlying the model of gradual improvement in method. The non-explanation that each generation is simply 'better' than the last is a misconception of historical process. Certainly we can see incremental development within a given framework – the refinement of absolute dating methods is an ideal example, and similar processes can also be seen in less clearly demarcated study areas where epistemologies and aims have not changed as rapidly as the methods of achieving them. But the position of Bachelard, who felt able to draw a complete distinction between the 'cumulative' development characteristic of the humanities and the 'ruptures and revolutions' of the history of the physical sciences (Bachelard 1985; Young 1990), rapidly becomes untenable when applied to the history of archaeology, in which both are readily visible, and indeed the most important mechanic for long-term change may well be the interplay of the two. Theories used to understand the development of knowledge are themselves historically situated, and the model of revolutions in the sciences and cumulative development in the humanities is contingent upon a late modern conception of both subject areas. It is a model that can be contrasted with an Enlightenment view in which, Lowenthal notes, "cumulative processes eventually become the hallmark of scientific knowledge, but in culture and the arts great precursors were felt to inhibit modern prowess, and novelty meant not advance but decline" (Lowenthal 1985: 95).

Changing epistemologies drive changes in approach, and for this reason must be understood if the history of archaeology is to make sense. The development and

change of epistemologies does not take place solely 'on-site', and so it is essential to look at the development of knowledge and ideas about the past in a much broader context, as this chapter will demonstrate.

Babylon in Late Antique Christian theology

The theological work of the Doctors of the Church in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages has been among the most important in shaping all aspects of European religious and intellectual culture. Referring to St Augustine, St Ambrose and St Jerome, Bertrand Russell claimed in his *History of Western Philosophy* that "it was not until nearly a thousand years later that Christendom again produced men who were their equals in learning and culture" (Russell 2004 (1946): 314). This estimation of the scholars themselves may go too far, but the implication of their great importance in intellectual history does not. Particularly important for the purposes of the present thesis are the two most prolific, and later most famed, of all Christian writers in Latin: St Jerome and St Augustine.

St Jerome

In one sense the importance of St Jerome (Eusebius Sophonius) has already been discussed, because his especial importance lies in translation of works discussed in Chapter 3. His Latin version of Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea's *Chronicon*[47] kept this work, which preserves chronological information on Mesopotamia from Berossus, Megasthenes and Abydenus[42], accessible to scholars (though in the long-term the work would have been preserved without

this translation, as Syriac and Armenian versions have also survived). As well as transmitting specific information on Mesopotamia, Jerome's translation of the *Chronicon* also preserved extended up to 378 CE (from 327 CE) Eusebius of Caesarea's synchronisation of pagan and Christian chronologies for world history (Rebenich 2002: 27). Further, the translation helped the work to achieve its status and influence as a key chronicle of history and much-used source on chronology in medieval Europe (Laistner 1940: 243). Jerome's commentaries on Daniel, Jeremiah and Isaiah[49] are also relevant to the later study and interpretation of these key sources on Babylon. All of these achievements, however, are utterly dwarfed by Jerome's masterpiece of biblical translation, the Latin Vulgate Bible.

The so-called Old Latin version of the Bible began to emerge in Africa and western Europe during the second century CE (Kelly 1975: 86). Reference to it as a single version is purely for convenience – one could more accurately speak of a heterogenous corpus of Old Latin versions, including multiple versions of books and no single version of them all. Jerome's work, produced over twenty-two years c.383-405 CE, was no mere standardisation, however. He was the first to translate the Old Testament into Latin from the Hebrew. Previously translators had worked only from the Greek Septuagint, which had its own school of justification as an inspired work and which Jerome's translation took centuries to supercede (Rebenich 2002: 52). Supercede them it did, however, and with profound consequences. The contemporary biblical translations into English used in Chapter 3 of this thesis take their form not because they are based on those of Jerome, but because they have adopted his insistence on

rendering the text as faithfully to the original language of composition as possible. Some results of this insistence can be seen in the historiography of Lucifer described by Stoyanov (2000; Chapter 3, this thesis), and in the ambiguities surrounding Babylon's desolation that stem from the difficulty of original Hebrew passages in Jeremiah and Isaiah (Chapter 4). A special and strange influence comes with the rise of a belief in Hebrew as the original language, spoken by Adam and Eve and by all humans before the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues (see Athanasius Kircher, below, and Chapter 7).

St Augustine

St Augustine is important to the present thesis in two respects: his impact upon what became a dominant Christian conception of history in general, and his situation of Babylon in particular within that history. As has already been noted (Chapter 2), Augustine plays a key role in introducing the Judeo-Christian concept of linearity, destiny and finity into Latin historiography with *De Civitate Dei*[51] (Bourke 1995: 295; Mommsen, T. E. 1995: 359). The same work is significant for its use of Babylon. Developing the role of Babylon from Revelation's allegory of Rome, *De Civitate Dei* was, ironically, a response to Alaric's sack of Christian Rome in 410 CE. Composed from 413 to 426 CE, Augustine's work addresses the threats to Christendom occasioned by the weakening and collapse of the Western Empire, and by the pagan reaction against Christianity as some Romans held the new religion responsible for the fall of the Eternal City (Kaufman 1995: 75-76). These concerns made the nature of history and of historical change particularly important to Augustine.

Against the prevailing sense of disaster in the Empire, shared by Jerome (who, in common with other theologians, thought Rome to be the fourth beast seen by Daniel (Daniel 7: 7-8), signifying the last kingdom before the Apocalypse (Pratt 1965: 31; Mommsen, T. E. 1995: 352-355)), Augustine's work focuses on the argument that for the Christian God's kingdom is not earthly. He looks forward to the Last Judgement as heralding a bright future for Christians in a heavenly Jerusalem (Brown 2000 (1967): 248), reached through the pilgrimage – including trials such as Rome's – that is the earthly City of God (Lancel 2002: 396). The glory of Rome was the Romans' earthly reward for: "the virtues by which they pursued the hard road that brought them at last to such glory," but "It was not God's purpose to grant these men eternal life with the angels in his heavenly city" (*De Civitate Dei* V. xv), for this can be achieved only through Christian piety and observance.

Augustine takes Revelation's original allegorical use of Babylon (the Old Testament accounts, whatever their broader implications, do refer to the city of Babylon itself) and develops it, explicitly removing its geographical ties and situating it instead in human hearts. In philosophical terms, Augustine is even able to move beyond the Christian context in his distinction between the two cities:

> [N]otwithstanding the many great nations that live throughout the world with different religious and moral practices and are distinguished by a rich variety of languages, arms and dress, nevertheless there have arisen no more than two classes, as it were, of human society. Following our Scriptures, we may well speak of them as two cities. For

> there is one city of men who choose to live carnally, and another who choose to live spiritually, each aiming at its own kind of peace, and when they achieve their respective purposes, they live such lives, each in its own kind of peace.
>
> (*De Civitate Dei* XIV. i)

Augustine writes that "the two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city by a love of self carried even to the point of contempt for God, the heavenly city by a love of God carried even to the point of contempt for self" (*De Civitate Dei* XIV. xxviii). In his commentary on Psalm 65 Augustine explicitly names Babylon and Jerusalem in these terms (Lancel 2002: 401). This distinction, and its elevation from specific geography and history to a place in history as structuring principle, have survived: their modern expression in Zionism and Rastafari are discussed in Chapter 7. Augustine is also arguably the originator of the notion that something external to time in the world (God, the heavenly city) exists, thereby engendering a focus on destiny and redemption in the future over the search for meaning in the present (Bittner 1999: 356). This focus, which also survives into modernity, gives the role of Babylon as the materialist earthly city a further connotation of inward-looking folly.

Medieval Arabic sources

The Quran

There is one reference to Babylon in the Quran. It is to be found in Al-Baqarah (the Cow)[52], the longest sura and therefore first after the Exordium in the traditional ordering of the Quran. The reference is found in a warning against

rejecting the teachings of the Quran, and listening to devils, who "teach men witchcraft and that which was revealed to the angels Harut and Marut at Babylon" (Al-Baqarah 2: 102, translation Dawood 1990: 15). The reference is to a narrative in which the angels laugh at humans for their weakness in succumbing to sin (Tisdall 1905: Ch. 3, section 4). God instructs them to choose two of the most virtuous of their number (Harut and Marut) to live on earth, with earthly desires. This they do, and as God predicts succumb to sin, tempted by a Persian princess into wine and adultery.

Al-Biruni

Greek chronologies for Mesopotamia were collected and compared by Abu-Raihan Muhammad Ibn ᶜAhmad al-Biruni (lived 973-1048 CE (362-440 AH)). His *Al-Athar al-Bakiya 'an-il-Kurun al-Khaliya*, usually translated as *Chronology of Ancient Nations*) includes three Mesopotamian chronologies, one Assyrian and two Babylonian. The work was highly influential, and its importance in the preservation of lost sources and other information is substantial. Sachau, its translator, wrote that:

> It is a standard work in Oriental literature, and has been recognised as such by the East itself, representing in its peculiar line the highest development of Oriental scholarship. Perhaps we shall one day find the literary sources from which Albîrûnî derived his information, and shall be enabled to dispense with his extracts from them. But there are other chapters... regarding which we shall, in all likelihood, never the author had learned the subject from hearsay among a population which was then on the eve of dying out.
>
> (Sachau 1879: v-vi)

Al-Biruni's Assyrian chronology runs for 1305 years, and among other points of interest offers relative dates for the sack of Troy and the reign of King David, while the Babylonian chronologies cover periods of 241 and 428 years. In the Assyrian chronology the first king is Belus, followed by Ninus, founder of Nineveh. Al-Biruni states that Abraham was born in the 43rd year of Ninus's reign, although all the reigns given are plausible for mortal kings – the very long reigns attributed to early kings in Sumerian, Akkadian and Hebrew lists are absent. Al-Biruni's founder of Babylon is Nimrod:

> According to some chronicler, Nimrôd ben Kush ben Ham ben Noah, founded a kingdom in Babylonia twenty-three years after the confusion of languages. And that was the earliest kingdom established on earth.
>
> (*Al Athar al-Bakiya* 87)

The phrases "some chronicler," "some author" and "some book" are used with frustrating regularity to refer to Al-Biruni's sources for these chronologies. He cites "Western authors" as sources for the story of Sardanapalus (in Al-Biruni's scheme Thônos Konkoleros) and his downfall at the hands of Arbaces (*Al-Athar al-Bakiya* 87 (Sachau 1879: 100)). The content of his version is enough to confirm Ctesias as the origin, but not necessarily as one of the actual works used by Al-Biruni – likely intermediaries are Diodorus Siculus and Photius. Ctesias is not the source, however, for the Babylonian chronologies. The first of these concerns the beginning of Babylon's history: the city is founded by Nimrod, while Semiramis is the founder of Samarra (*Al-Athar al-Bakiya* 88). She is succeeded not by Ninyas, as in Ctesias, but by a Zameis, whose name

reappears in the seventeenth-century chronology of Athanasius Kircher (below). Al-Biruni's second Babylonian chronology runs from "Nebukadnezar the First (i.e. Nabonassar)" (*Al-Athar al-Bakiya* 88 / Sachau 1879: 100) up to Alexander the Great, totalling 428 years. The last pre-Persian king is "Belteshassar" (reigned 4 years), followed by "Darius the Median, the First" (17 years) and "Cyrus, who rebuilt Jerusalem" (9 years). Of all the known chronologies for Babylon, this one accords best with that of Daniel.

Medieval Hebrew sources

Ibn Daud

A key medieval source from the point of view of Jewish historiography is the *Sefer ha-Qbbalah* (*Book of Tradition*)[65] of Abraham Ibn Daud, composed in Spain 1160-1161 CE (4921 AM). According to the work's translator into English, "In Jewish circles, Ibn Daud's history achieved much the same kind of influence that the works of Orosius and Isidore had in medieval Christian historiography" (Cohen 1967: xiii). Ibn Daud was concerned with demonstrating the antiquity and continuity of rabbinical tradition. This in itself is historiographically important in that it marks a difference from the Augustinian Christian tradition:

> The assumption of an unbroken Jewish experience pervades medieval Jewish treatment of the biblical text. Biblical events are assumed to serve as precedents for subsequent Jewish experience. There is a conviction of repetition, with key patterns recurring throughout all phases of Jewish life.
>
> (Chazan 1988: 42)

As in Augustine, Babylon's significance is rendered timeless, but here for a different reason, and one more akin to the Greek cyclical conception of history. If Chazan is correct, it follows that the Babylonian Captivity becomes a hardship that will recur throughout Jewish history. At the same time, however, the concern with demonstrating continuity in scholarly tradition still gave Ibn Daud good reason to be concerned with chronology, and with the specific history of Babylon.

Although developed within rabbinical tradition, the *Sefer ha-Qaballah* relies more heavily on Ibn Daud's own study of biblical texts than on existing scholarship (Cohen 1967: 168). The result is a chronology in which Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem three times, in the first, eighteenth and twenty-third years of his reign. In the first attack he carries off Jehoiachim, Daniel and the three companions of the burning fiery furnace of Daniel 3 (see below). In the second he takes Jehoiachin and some seventeen thousand captives (Ibn Daud notes a contradiction with the figure of 3,023 given by Jeremiah, arguing that this is the figure for heads of families). It is not until his final attack that he destroys the Temple and captures Zedekiah (*Sefer ha-Qabbalah* I. 123-142). Forty-seven years later, Ibn Daud's Belshazzar is betrayed by his own officers in fulfilment of Isaiah 21: 5 (*Sefer ha-Qaballah* I. 148-149). All of these occur in the mid-fourth millennium dating from the creation of Adam, with the destruction of the Temple in 3362 (*Sefer ha-Qaballah* I. 19-23).

Although influential in Jewish scholarship, Ibn Daud's work fell out of favour in Christian historiography. In the mid-sixteenth century Calvin attacked the commentary on Daniel of Don Isaac Abravanel, which was based on the chronology of the *Sefer ha-Qaballah* (Baron 1972: 342-343). The attack did much to discredit rabbinical historical scholarship generally, and Ibn Daud's Babylonian chronology in particular, in the emergent Protestant Christianity of northern Europe.

Early European images and medieval manuscript illuminations

Early European artistic images of Babylon or Babylonians are concentrated around three subjects: the life of Daniel, the siege of Jerusalem and the Tower of Babel. A common image is that of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the burning fiery furnace. In Daniel 3 the three Jews refuse to worship a huge golden idol set up by Nebuchadnezzar, who has them thrown into the fire. Once in the furnace the three are unharmed. Further, Nebuchadnezzar can see four men walking in the fire, and, he observes, "the fourth looks like a god" (Daniel 3: 25). Nebuchadnezzar is struck both by the faith of the Jews and the power of their god, and, if not going so far as to convert, issues a remarkable decree: "Anyone, whatever his people, nation, or language, if he speaks blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, is to be hacked limb from limb and his house is to be reduced to rubble; for there is no other god who can save in such a manner" (Daniel 3: 29). This story is a good example of the ambiguity regarding Nebuchadnezzar's role in the Old Testament: not only an oppressor, he acts in many ways as a sponsor to Daniel and other Jews, and is prepared to take Daniel's advice and accept his interpretations of dreams. The

message of trust in God protecting the faithful is a powerful one with obvious resonance for early European Christians. The scene, featuring only Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, is depicted in the Catacombs of, Rome, in a fresco dating to the late 3rd century CE[43]. Interestingly their poses are repeated in an early twelfth century manuscript illustration: the Latin *Silos Apocalypse*[60], produced in Spain and illustrated by one Petrus (Fig. 5.1). This illustration also features an angelic protector of the three, as well as larger images of the enthroned Nebuchadnezzar and courtiers worshipping the idol. Another 12th century manuscript illustration comes from the Bible of Etienne Harding. This image is known as *Les enfants dans la fournaise*[63], since the figures of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego are the smallest in the composition, cradled in the arms of an angel in the furnace. The largest figure is a slightly comical Nebuchadnezzar, plump and ornately dressed. The smaller figure appealing to him may be Daniel. As an illustration to a personal Bible this scene is an easy choice to understand – espousals of humility and piety reflect well on the wealthy and powerful patron/owner of the work. A more lavish representation can be seen in a fifteenth century German (Augsburg School) oil painting of the scene[91]. In this image the Jews in the furnace are calm and in prayer, and the fire itself seems to emanate from them as a kind of radiance or corona. Around and above them are smooth grey arches; below is a chaotic scene, dominated by Nebuchadnezzar's servants standing awkwardly as they try to shield themselves from the flames. The iconography is that of shielding mortal eyes from the sight of God.

The other common representation from Daniel is the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. A particularly interesting image is a fifteenth century Flemish manuscript illumination in which Nebuchadnezzar is pictured asleep while the tree symbolizing his power grows from his bed[89]. A white-haired, bearded man stands by it with the axe that will chop it down, but the size, prominence and costume of this latter figure suggest it may represent Daniel, substantially altering the meaning of the story by implying that the prophet is God's agent in bringing down the Babylonian king. More conventional is to depict Daniel before the court of Nebuchadnezzar. These scenes may be lavish (*Nebuchadnezzar questions Daniel and his companions*, Master of Marradi, Florence 1480-1500; *Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's first dream*[157], Erasmus Quellinus, Flemish, mid-late seventeenth century) or extremely dark (*Daniel before Nebuchadnezzar*[156], Salomon Koninck, Dutch, mid-seventeenth century; *Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's first dream*[159], Mattia Preti (Il Calabrese), Calabria, mid-late seventeenth century. With the exception of the Erasmus Quellinus image, which resembles later romanticist images of Eastern courts, the settings appear European. The scene has also been used to illustrate Dante's *Divine Comedy* (*Nebuchadnezzar's dream*, Giovanni di Paulo, Tuscany c.1450), in an image that also includes the figures of Moses, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist and the archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel.

Images of the siege of Jerusalem focus on the city itself, with the Babylonians included as an encircling army in European costume. The best-known examples come from manuscript illustration. Although a comparison of representations of

Jerusalem and Babylon would be interesting in its own right we cannot do justice to the topic here. Examples of these images are presented to illustrate content, the only point of significance to bear in mind here being the fact that this image is a popular one, and that Nebuchadnezzar's attacks on Jerusalem are not forgotten in the representation of his character from Daniel. Indeed, one famous siege illustration is the illumination of the opening letter to the book of Daniel itself (*Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem*, Great Bible (Vulgate)[93], England 1405-1415).

One early fantastic illustration of the Tower of Babel is found in the *Bedford Hours*[96], a lavish fifteenth century book of hours illustrated in Paris (Fig. 5.2). As in many other medieval illustrations, the tower and its building techniques are contemporary. So too are the costumes of the builders, and of king Nimrod and his architects, who from this point on appear with great consistency in almost all pre-nineteenth century images of the tower. The *Bedford Hours* image, though exceptional in the quality of its production, is typical in all these features of medieval manuscript illustrations of the Tower of Babel. It is interesting to note that, despite the explicit moral role of the tower as a warning against ambition and pride, it could simultaneously act as a showcase for developments and achievements in the medieval mason's art.

Babylon in medieval cosmology: Dante

Although its references to Mesopotamia are all brief, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is useful for the purposes of the present thesis for two reasons. First, the contemporary and later influence of Dante's work in general lends extra weight

to the mentions it does make of Babylon in terms of representation. Second, the *Divine Comedy* is essentially a moral categorization of human beings by type, based in large part on the personal values and prejudices that in many though by no means all cases he shared with other Christian thinkers of his age. The careful, reasoned classification of sin found in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* offer exactly the kind of grand model Lewis had in mind when writing *The Discarded Image* (1964; see Chapter 4). The model successfully integrates biblical and classical traditions, as well as applying itself to Dante's contemporary world (Auerbach 1952: 6). Its categories and hierarchies hold many surprises for the present-day reader: Alexander, for example, is to be found in the river of blood around the seventh circle of Hell with Attila and other "tyrants, who took to sword and pillaging" (*Inferno* xii. 104-5), while Saladin is placed in Limbo, the first circle of Hell and the best fate available to a non-Christian in this schema (*Inferno* iv. 129). Both placements seem to us at first anachronistically 'modern' in an age of religious Crusades, yet the treatment of Saladin must be reconciled with the grisly fate Dante writes for the Prophet Mohammed in *Inferno* xxviii – the author cannot be mistaken for displaying a great tolerance of Islam. The only mention of the city of Babylon is in the highest reaches of Heaven, as a great trial that has been passed:

> Oh quanta è l'ubertà che si soffolce
> in quelle arche ricchissime che fuoro
> a seminar qua giù buone bobolce!
> Quivi si vive e gode del tesoro
> che s'acquistò piangendo ne lo essilio
> di Babillòn, ove si lasciò l'oro.

Oh what great wealth, crammed down in there, among
These richest coffers which, below on earth,
Were goodly husbandmen, and true seed flung.
Here they have life and joy in just that worth
Of treasure, earned in banishment and weeping
In Babylon, and scorning gold for dearth.
(*Paradiso* xxiii. 130-135)

The biblical reference is to Psalm 137, and the role of Babylon is that of purgatory-on-Earth. More use is made of the Babylon of Revelation, in the sense that Dante's visions in the earthly paradise (*Purgatorio* xxxii. 130-160) relate closely to those of Revelation. Unlike Augustine Dante does use them for the condemnation of Rome, but the meaning is nonetheless different from that of Revelation itself: this time the attack is directed at Christian Rome, and the corruption of the Church.

Despite such scant reference to the city as a whole, several characters associated with Babylon are treated individually. Semiramis is found very early on, in the second circle of Hell, reserved for sexual sinners and battered by an eternal storm. She is grouped with, among others, Cleopatra, Tristan and the lovers of the Iliad: Achileus, Paris, Helen. Virgil describes her to Dante:

«La prima di color di cui novelle
tu vuo' saper», mi disse quelli allotta,
«fu imperadrice di molte favelle.
A vizio di lussuria fu sì rotta,

che libito fé licito in sua legge,

per tòrre il biasmo in che era condotta.

Ell' è Semiramìs, di cui si legge

che succedette a Nino e fu sua sposa:

tenne la terra che 'l Soldan corregge.»

'The first of those of whom you question, she's

Empress of many tongues,' he then replied

'And so undone with lechery that her decrees

Mingled her lust into her law and tried

To shift away from her own acts the blame

Which to her own loose conduct had applied.

Queen Semiramis was her earthly name;

We read she was to Ninus wife and heir.

She held the land which is the Sultan's claim.'

(*Inferno* v. 52-60)

This account is enough to confirm that Dante's Semiramis is a combination of those described by Ctesias and Athenaeus, via Diodorus Siculus and presumably a Latin translation or epitome. Brumble (1998: 308) suggests Orosius who, as has already been noted (Chapter 3), emphasised and elaborated the Semiramis' sexual transgressions. Certainly *Historia Adversus Paganos* was a particularly popular and much-reproduced work in the Middle Ages (Laistner 1940: 250). Further, although a name is not given, it seems likely that Dante designates Orosius as a "little light" in the fourth heaven, that of the sun (*Paradiso* x. 118-120) (Dronke 1986: 95), supporting the suggestion that Dante used and respected his work.

The final line of the quote above suggests that he was aware of Babylon's geographical closeness to Baghdad, although all he actually says is that the areas ruled by the two are the same. The moral dimension of Virgil's comments, however, is framed in an apparently original way. The Semiramis of Ctesias does not try "to shift away from her own acts the blame." She is a semi-mythical barbarian queen and, like a Greek immortal, is quite reasonably presumed not to care. She finds herself in the second circle because she "mingled her lust into law," but one might be forgiven for thinking, given that in Ctesias she routinely had her lovers executed, she would be found in the second chasm of the seventh circle, with those who are violent against others. Perhaps these unnamed victims are considered to be of no moral consequence here. It is possible, if Orosius was the only source, that Dante is not referring to or was not even aware of this part of the story. Orosius speaks of her cruelty only in more general terms, and of her killing only in wars, focusing instead on her licentiousness. Whatever the case, a wide gulf separates Semiramis from Babylon's other representative in Hell, Nimrod. Interestingly the latter is not identified with Ninus, Ctesias's founder of Babylon, and no attempt is made to resolve this apparent conflict. There is some indication that for Dante the conflict did not occur. On the one hand some later sources suggest the concept of a dispersal immediately after the confusion of tongues, followed by a re-founding of Babylon (cf. Kircher, later in this chapter), on the other Nimrod, when we finally reach him in the lowest reaches of Hell, is clearly a creature of another age. Dante follows the historical Virgil (*Aeneid* XII. 899-900) in thinking people were physically larger before the Flood (Levine 1967: 457). Nimrod is in the ninth circle for his treachery to God, and is conceived as one of

the giants who made war on heaven. While the previous levels of Hell have involved dire and violent punishments, the giants are simply chained, and still appear very dangerous. Nimrod is given the longest description of any of them, and even has a speech, though it is nonsense. As Virgil explains to Dante,

> Poi disse a me: «Elli stessi s'accusa;
> questi è Nembrotto per lo cui mal coto
> pur un linguaggio nel mondo non s'usa.
> Lasciànlo stare e non parliamo a vòto;
> ché così è a lui ciascun linguaggio
> come 'l suo ad altrui, ch'a nullo è noto».
>
> He told me: 'He condemns himself in speech.
> This is the Nimrod, through whose evil spurred,
> We cannot speak one language, each to each.
> Let's leave him standing there, nor waste a word
> For every language is the same to him,
> As his own to us, senseless, absurd.'
> (*Inferno* xxxi. 76-81)

The monstrous, chained, giant Nimrod is part of the climax of the *Inferno*, and is much more prominent than the later passage, in the *Purgatorio*, where we encounter a figure more familiar to us: Dante and Virgil walk along a path where the proud are depicted to be trodden underfoot. Here Nimrod sees, along with the people of Shinar (Sumer), the ruin of his tower. The two representations in Dante are not factually inconsistent, but that of the *Inferno* certainly does conflict with the Nimrod of our medieval illustrations of the

tower, of which that described in the *Purgatorio* seems more representative. Moral teaching lies at the heart of all these works, and in this respect the monstrous giant who wars against heaven and the man who is misguided merely by dint of ambition and pride are very different: the latter description is an example from which one is intended to learn humility, the former a shocking image from which one can learn only fear: of Nimrod, of God, and of Hell.

Nebuchadnezzar is not one of the characters Dante meets, and he receives only a brief reference:

> Fé sì Beatrice qual fé Danïello,
>
> Nabuccodonosor levando d'ira,
>
> che l'avea fatto ingiustamente fello;
>
> And Beatrice [Dante's love and guide through Heaven] took the role on Daniel thrust,
>
> In saving Nebuchadnezzar from the ire
>
> That rendered him so cruel and unjust.
>
> (*Paradiso* iv. 13-15)

This cursory treatment is, considering Dante's theme of sin and redemption and Nebuchadnezzar's biblical fame, quite strange. The best explanation would seem to lie in the complications of Daniel itself: Dante's original source presents two morally quite different kings, only one of whom finds any kind of redemption (cf. Chapter 3). The situation is further complicated by Nebuchadnezzar's 'madness' – the seven years spent living as a wild beast. Dante may not have felt able to resolve the different sides of Nebuchadnezzar to

his satisfaction, though it is the nature of his work to confront theological and moral problems with logical argument. The problem of Nebuchadnezzar's fit into a single identity is a particularly difficult one from the point of view of producing a medieval synthesis, however, since the key sources are not only canonical but biblical, and the central contradiction occurs within a single source. The idea of Nebuchadnezzar's inconsistency in itself is unsatisfactory. The dominant contemporary psychological perspective on behaviour, in common with much of the medieval curriculum, was drawn from Aristotle, whose quotidian, or everyday, ethics emphasized the importance of habit, i.e. the idea that performing good actions reinforces our disposition to perform more good actions in the future; the behaviour itself goes some way to forming the character of the actor. Consequently Dante's model is intended to punish and reward tendencies more than specific actions, and specific actions are always taken to be indicative of the whole personality of those he meets in the *Divine Comedy*. The system works by rule, not degree, and although individuals in the *Purgatorio* may display a mixture of virtues and vices they are consistent. Nebuchadnezzar's shifting pattern of cruelty, madness and submission to wise counsel, therefore, is difficult to incorporate. If the problem was resolved we will probably never know the medieval solution. As it is all known representations of Nebuchadnezzar from this period show him in one or other of his roles.

Babel in the Northern Renaissance

Bruegel and Flemish Tower of Babel images

The most famous images of the Tower are much earlier than the (largely romanticist) artworks that constitute most of the canon on Babylon. These are the two epic Peter Bruegel the Elder paintings[125, 126] (Figs. 5.3, 5.4), famous for the strong political statement they made by placing the Tower of Babel, symbol of pride and decay, in a contemporary (mid-sixteenth century) Flemish setting. These paintings show an allegorical understanding of Babylon as a set of characteristics that a place can possess, rather than as a historical city in itself. The tower itself is based on the Roman Coliseum; whether this was a conscious reference to the Rome/Babylon of Revelation or a more straightforward use of this well-known icon of the ruined and picturesque is unclear, although the fate of Rome certainly has a resonance that fits well with Bruegel's message to his own country. Bruegel was a Catholic but, like much art of the Northern Renaissance, his work fits well with an important theme of the Reformation: the Protestant reaction against luxury expressed through the bare churches of Calvinism. For Protestant contemporaries of Bruegel, Babylon was equated with Rome, Revelation having been read partly as an allegory of Protestantism's battles with papal authority and the Roman Church (Hankins 1945: 364) in a manner very similar to that employed by Dante (above).

Although Bruegel's two are the only pictures still famous today, they are actually early representatives of a Flemish genre. Between the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there appeared dozens of paintings and drawings of the same subject, some by students of Bruegel himself, treated in an

often almost identical manner. The first of these paintings are thought to be Hendrick Van Cleve's earlier Tower of Babel images[111, 112, 113], while the first clear uses of the Colisseum as a model found in the present research are an engraving by Cornelius Anthonisz[123] (1547; Fig. 5.5) and a woodcut by Bernard Salomon[124] (1554).

The Flemish Tower of Babel images are collected in Ulrike Wegener's *Die Faszination des Maßlosen: der Turmbau zu Babel von Pieter Bruegel bis Athanasius Kircher* (Wegener 1995). Though fantastic as wholes, the architectural details of the towers in these images tend to be more or less modelled on classical ruins, particularly the Roman Colliseum, while the surrounding towns and harbours are recognizable as towns in the artists' contemporary environments. Nimrod is usually shown receiving the plans from his architect/s, as a small figure in the foreground to one side of the tower itself. Viewpoint and the scale of the tower itself also tend to follow Bruegel.

No Mesopotamian visual reference points were available for the Flemish images. Arguably the first of these come with the drawings commissioned by Piettro della Valle, showing a present-day tell (Tell Babil; see Chapter 3, this thesis) and reproduced with a Latin translation of della Valle's description in Athanasius Kircher's 1679 *Turris Babel* (of which more below), and with the inscribed bricks brought to Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by della Valle, Engelbert Kämpfer, who visited Iran in 1686 (Lundquist 1995: 70) and the Abbé Barthélemy (Budge 1925: 63). These

constitute a meagre resource – indeed, the della Valle images show only a tell, and reveal nothing of its contents.

Athanasius Kircher

Athanasius Kircher's *Turris Babel* (Kircher 1679) is a unique theological and historical work, bringing together the observations of della Valle, the implications of Old Testament chronology, the Babylonian histories of Ctesias and Herodotus, the moral aspects of the story of the Tower of Babel and a treatise on linguistics. Kircher was interested in the Genesis Confusion of Tongues (he is also known to Egyptologists for his serious but unsuccessful attempt to decipher hieroglyphs. Iverson judges that "From a humanistic as well as an intellectual point of view Egyptology may very well be proud of having Kircher as its founder" (Iversen 1993 (1961): 98)).

Turris Babel confronts the present-day reader with the full extent of the epistemological gulf between seventeenth-century and contemporary academic thought, and gives the lie to the quite deceptive modern intelligibility of some travel accounts of its time. It also challenges the tendency to assume that, on the basis of knowledge building up in a linear and cumulative way (as in Bachelard's model for the humanities, discussed above), scholarly works such as Kircher's will tend to be more 'modern' in their assumptions and arguments than less scholarly works, such as travel accounts, that rely more heavily on hearsay, folklore and contemporary common knowledge. *Turris Babel* is a scholarly work drawing on a multitude of sources, and the Babylon Kircher presents is in some ways the most complete version we will encounter in any

source, and yet in many respects it is more alien to *Das Wiedererstehende Babylon* (Koldewey 1913) than the accounts of Herodotus or Ctesias. In trying to resolve all available knowledge about Babylon, Kircher creates a world that requires us to have more faith in the magical, the divine and the fantastic than any other source. The combination of most complete and most implausible is not a coincidence: Kircher works, with the skill and erudition of the true polymath, to achieve a harmony, consistency and completeness that is simply impossible, and in so doing creates a work that is rich and strange in equal measure.

Kircher offers us a map of the movement of Noah's descendents from Mount Ararat into "Senaar" (Sumer) (Fig. 5.6) that shows the two rivers joining at Babylon. Another map (*Turris Babel* I, opp. p96) shows the city cut into three segments as the rivers meet and then follow a single course toward the Persian Gulf. The former map is also interesting in that it resolves the common route of travel (an arc across the 'fertile crescent' from the Levant to northern Iraq, avoiding the Syrian desert) into a straight line running north-south, whereby the Caspian Sea occupies the north edge of the map, followed by Mount Ararat, with the Euphrates and Tigris originating below. The meeting of the rivers has two possible explanations: I would favour the first, that the measure is taken to resolve some of the confusion caused by classical accounts in their references to Nineveh as Babylon and Babylon on the Tigris (cf. Chapter 3), since Nineveh itself is ambiguously placed, apparently stretching between the two rivers; but there is also a possibility that Kircher knew that one could sail between the two rivers near Babylon (which was true, at least at the time of Rich, using a raft or

flat-bottomed boat in April when the Euphrates was in flood (Rich 1815: 13-14)), and concluded that the two must have joined in this way.

Kircher's chronology for the foundation of Babylon takes as its basis the life of Noah. He offers dates counting forward from the beginning of the world; based on the age of Noah; and counting forward from the Flood, at which point the world had existed for 1657 years (Kircheri 1679: I: 14). According to this system he places a co-regency of Nembrod and Belus at the end of the second millennium, with both their deaths in the 1996th year of the world (the 940th of Noah's life and the 340th since the Flood). They are immediately succeeded by Ninus, who nine years later also becomes king of Assyria. This must owe something to Diodorus Siculus: as already mentioned, the Ctesias description reported that he "set about the task of subduing the nations of Asia, and within a period of seventeen years he became master of them all except the Indians and Bactrians" (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. ii. 1). Accordingly Ninus is succeeded by Semiramis, but here Kircher diverges from Diodorus, and as in the chronology of Al-Biruni she is succeeded not by Ninyas but by Zameis. Nembrod reigns for at least 250 years, against Ninus's and Semiramis' shorter but still lengthy reigns of 52 and 42 years respectively (Kircheri 1679: I: 106). None of these imply natural life-spans, since Semiramis was the contemporary of Ninus, but the pattern of a gradual reduction in life expectancy follows the models of the Old Testament and indeed the Sumerian king list.

The many images in *Turris Babel* are mainly the work of Conraet Decker and Lievin Cruyl, and were commissioned by Kircher for the purpose. They present

a variety of views of the tower and the city, although conforming to a general pattern similar to that of the Flemish painters, whereby Roman ruins and Egyptian obelisks were mixed with more contemporary architecture. Nembrod (Fig. 5.7), Ninus and Semiramis (*Turris Babel* I: 43) are all shown in Roman military dress (in another hunting scene with Ninus Semiramis is also shown in Roman robes and with a placid expression, although even here she is depicted as active and aggressive, in the act of shooting at a leopard (*Turris Babel* I: 57).

One of the problems with producing a consistent representation of the Tower of Babel was the contradiction between its apparent destruction very early in human history and the eye-witness accounts of its existence, and indeed destruction at human hands, in Greek accounts. Kircher adopts Orosius's (see Chapter 3) solution to this problem: a second tower, built by Ninus and Semiramis. This interpretation apparently still held some currency for Rich and Keppel in the early nineteenth century, and a similar problem is still being resolved today, in that Herodotus describes a temple that ought, by the time of his visit to Mesopotamia, to have been destroyed by Xerxes (as mentioned in Chapter 3, Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987) argue that this is a misinterpretation of the textual sources).

As well as the Tower(s) of Babel (Fig. 5.8), illustrations include views of the entire city (Fig. 5.9), and of the Hanging Gardens. The former is laid out on a grid pattern, after Herodotus, with the river (only one, contradicting the maps) running through the centre, and monumental buildings, including the tower, in the centre of the city and on either side of the river. This is consistent with the

travellers' reports available at the time, which tend to have overstated the visible ruins on the western bank of the Euphrates. The whole city is surrounded by a moat, with bridges running into the walls at regular intervals through the hundred gates of Herodotus (see Chapter 3). Despite the tendency toward classical architecture in the tower, the image is clearly intended to have an Asian setting: in the foreground we see people mounted on elephants moving toward the city.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspects of *Turris Babel* are Kircher's attempts to bring scientific and humanistic analysis to bear on those aspects of the Genesis Tower of Babel account hardest to interpret literally, i.e. the attempt to build the tower up to heaven and the subsequent Confusion of Tongues. This approach simply does not admit of allegory, and Kircher graphically demonstrates the impossibility of building a tower to reach heaven (Fig. 5.10). That impossibility, furthermore, is argued on the basis of the astronomical insight that the nearest heavenly body, the moon, is simply *too far up*. Kircher calculates that to reach the moon the tower would require 3 million tonnes of material, be 178, 672 miles high, and would tip the Earth off balance. For Kircher the problem of scaling heaven, while insurmountable, is a mechanical one.

Rembrandt

A contrast to the many Tower of Babel images of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is Rembrandt's *Belshazzar's Feast*[169] (c.1635; Fig. 5.11). This image covers the Daniel 5 subject of the Writing on the Wall in a highly original way.

Rembrandt asked a friend to give him the Hebrew for Daniel's reading, and copied this – with a mistake (Irving Finkel pers. comm.). Belshazzar is here depicted as a turbaned, oriental king, similar to those in some of the Flemish Tower of Babel painting. The use of Hebrew can ultimately be traced back to St Jerome's translations, and to the valuing of original Hebrew sources over the Greek Septuagint. Its effectiveness as a device in this context, however, depends on a difference with the Islamic perspective on scriptural authority, whereby the original language is too important and integral a part of the Quran for any translation to suffice. Had Christian theology adopted the same position educated Europeans would have been required to be well-versed in biblical Hebrew and Greek, and hence Rembrandt's device could not have worked.

Babylon in modern Europe

Voltaire

Della Valle and Kircher appear at an interesting time. Kircher was writing not long after Isaac Lapeyrère's *Preadamitaei* (Lapeyrère 1656), or *Men Before Adam*, and perhaps more importantly, after Lapeyrère's arrest in Treuremberg (Schnapp 1996: 222). The establishment of a new, long chronology for humanity's existence was imminent, but the dangers of heresy were still very real. The eighteenth century would see rapid changes in the scope and influence of geology, natural history and antiquarianism. The growth of the Enlightenment tradition in humanism and science is today celebrated as the period in which many modern fields of study came of age. Not everyone, of course, had quite the proper reverence at the time, and by the mid-eighteenth

century the empiricism and commitment to historical accuracy relating to Mesopotamia had, for Voltaire, become nothing less than a tremendous bore. His play, *Sémiramis*[192] (completed 1748), and the novels *Zadig*[190] (1749) and *La Princesse de Babylone*[194] (1768), demonstrate a majestically casual contempt for such trifling concerns. Their storylines are original, or at least owe far more to the *Arabian Nights* than to Greek or biblical sources on Babylon, and Mesopotamia is merely the source of exotic names and the glamorous location of Babylon, of which Voltaire offers a beautiful though entirely fanciful description at the start of *La Princesse de Babilone*. By the end of this romantic adventure the author is having sufficient fun to step into his story and make a rather unorthodox appeal to the Muses against the professors of the Sorbonne, whose usefulness he can nonetheless appreciate:

> [J]e vous recommende ma Princesse de Babilone; dites en bien du mal afin qu'on la lise... Tachez surtout d'engager le sieur Riballier à faire condemner la Princesse de Babilone par la Sorbonne; vous ferez grand plaisir à mon libraire à qui j'ai donné cette petite histoire pour ses étrennes.
>
> I recommend you to my Princess of Babylon: say every thing you can against it, that it might be read... [E]ndeavour to prevail upon the Sieur Riballier to have the Princess of Babylon condemned by the Sorbonne : you will, thereby, afford my bookseller much pleasure, to whom I have presented this little history for his New Year's gift.
>
> (Voltaire 1768: 184; anonymous translation 1969: 127)

Against such charm should be weighed the fact that Voltaire's work is instrumental in building the European use of Western Asia, ancient and modern, as an infinitely malleable resource for exotica. His distaste for serious attempts

to learn about the Mesopotamian past expresses, for all its charm, a contempt for the subject matter as well as its students. This contempt is one side of a great ambivalence in Voltaire: he is by turns a fastidious historian (of France) and a committed sceptic of historical practice.

> So, although he engages in extensive historical research in search of facts, the simultaneous awareness of the probable inaccuracy of sources neither deters Voltaire from writing history nor does it inhibit him in the slightest... indeed, his method of systematic doubt renders him permanently assertive. The admission of both the practical impossibility of omniscience and of the philosophical pyrrhonism of history illustrates how cavalierly the historian Voltaire could dismiss the fears of contemporary historians about their own inadequacies in relation to the chosen historical subject matter.
>
> (Pierse 2003: 79)

In drawing out these problems of veracity, Voltaire echoes the approach taken in Lucien of Samosata's *True Stories* (c.170-180 CE; D'Ablancourt 1977), in which the author challenges the notion of historical truth by happily labelling himself a liar before launching into a series of stories that, though fantastic and magical, clearly parallel events described by historians, and take comparable forms (Bowerstock 1994: 6)

Following the playful irreverence of Voltaire, the weight and earnestness of romanticism hits us with some force. Two of the great English romantics (though neither used the term themselves) produced famous and influential representations of Babylon: William Blake and George Gordon, Lord Byron.

William Blake

At the end of the eighteenth century the works of William Blake can be seen to take on some of the aims and functions of Dante or Milton. Blake develops a schema in which, like Dante in particular, he is concerned with the placement of types, and represents these types through individuals or groups (Frye 1951). The schema itself, however, is very different. Northrop Frye's interpretation of the model is dominated by Blake's distinction between what he called innocence and experience, each of which can dominate in six types of being or matter: the divine, human, animal, mineral, vegetable and chaotic. In terms of Blake's imagery, Babylon appears as a manifestation of the mineral and of experience, i.e. as a physical (mineral) place whose characteristics are defined by worldly experience. At this point, however, the similarities come to an end. Although Blake placed sin on the side of experience, and virtue on that of innocence, the conclusions he drew from this were radical. For him, experience meant not only the kinds of sin with which Babylon has generally been associated, but also with all those institutions through which humans mitigate and restrain their desires; that is, law and society. Against this, uninhibited sexuality falls on the side of innocence, because it lies outside the production of social norms and controls:

> Natural life flowers in uninhibited sexuality; and all its forms, vegetable, animal, and human, are holy to the imagination of the poet, who appears as piper and shepherd and in whose vision, at its burning core, stands Christ as child, lamb or lion.
>
> (Hagstrum 1964: 78)

Blake argued that all forms of moral, religious and legal restraint sapped human energy, holding people back from innocence and salvation (Blunt 1943: 192). The idea of innocence as desire checked by the world of experience leads to the conclusion that the latter is straining against a more powerful and primitive force that will ultimately overwhelm it. This is exactly Blake's point, for innocence was also the side of the New Jerusalem. Until its triumph innocence will strain and encroach upon the unnatural state of experience, hence the manifestations of innocence will be seen as negative by the society they threaten. Blake's distrust of the constraints of society gives a foretaste of what, a century later, would re-surface in the fin-de-siècle fascination with forbidden sexuality. To see uninhibited sexuality as redemptive, however, seems somewhat at odds with Babylon's place as the home of both sin *per se* and of carnal sin in particular.

Blake produced several images relating to Babylon, of which far the most famous is his *Nebuchadnezzar*[199] (1805; Fig. 5.12). This shows the Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel 4: 31-33, during his seven years in the wilderness. He is mad, naked, and crawling on all fours like a beast, a pose Edgar Wind traced back to Albrecht Dürer's depiction of St John Chrysostomos, producing a deliberate circularity since the latter consciously based his own penance on the wilderness years of the former (Wind 1938, cited in Butlin 1990: 91). The probable partner to this image is the figure of Newton (Fig. 5.13), in this case embodying reason against Nebuchadnezzar's madness. Blake originally used Nebuchadnezzar in plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*[198] (Blake

1979 (1790)), the major differences being that in the earlier image Nebuchadnezzar wore a crown, in reference to the recent fall of the French monarchy, and that beneath it is written the caption "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression," a phrase repeated in the accompanying paragraph. Blake shows Nebuchadnezzar living and suffering by the law of the beasts, i.e. that of the senses, and gives a devil (the roles of devils and angels are deliberately confused in the work) a speech in which he argues that Christ himself broke several of the Ten Commandments. This theme is reprised in *The Everlasting Gospel* (Blake 1979 (1818)), whose argument is that no moral teaching of Jesus was original, and that the real substance of the Gospels is, simply and exclusively, the forgiveness of sin. Blake argues for licence, particularly for the great, and scorns 'moral virtues:' for him they are part of experience, and false:

> The Heathen Deities wrote them all:
> These Moral Virtues great and small.
> What is the Accusation of Sin
> But Moral Virtue's deadly Gin?
> The Moral Virtues in their Pride,
> Did o'er the World triumphant ride
> In Wars & Sacrifice for Sin,
> And Souls to Hell ran trooping in.
> (*The Everlasting Gospel* 2: 5-12)

Blake's position with respect to Babylon, however, remains superficially traditional. It remains for him the city of sin, yet the sin is not luxury or amorality. As with Bruegel, Babylon is not only itself but also the city of Blake's own experience, and its sins are as much the artifice of order and

restraint as the excesses of the Great Whore; or rather the latter is the product of the former. Revelation's Whore of Babylon is actually depicted in Blake's own sketches (c.1810) for what Dante Gabriel Rossetti later named *A Vision of the Last Judgement*[205, 206, 207].

> Despite its unfinished state it is widely considered Blake's most programmatic aesthetic statement. Nowhere else does he display so fully his notions of art, imagination, and apocalypse, as well as the tensions inherent among them. And in no other place does Blake attend so explicitly to Babylon.
>
> (Goldsmith 1993: 142)

The Great Whore, here found in the bottom centre of the composition, is an important element in Blake's work, but what she stands for is the deviant, misguided power that experience has created. Her sexual sins, we can therefore conclude, are of a character wholly alien to the free sexuality of Blake's innocence, and like all other experience are destroyed in the coming of the New Jerusalem, represented by the coming of Christ in the top picture. Thus *A Vision of the Last Judgement* makes explicit the metaphor of experience buckling under the pressure of innocence.

Ultimately the metanarrative of history as human progress would all but obliterate this point of view; even in his own time Blake was championing devalued imagination against ascendant reason. For Hegel, a century later,

> The History of the World is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East

> knew and to the present day knows only that *One* is Free; the Greek and Roman world, that *some* are free; the German world knows that *All* are free. The first political form therefore which we observe in History is *Despotism*, the second *Democracy* and *Aristocracy*, the third *Monarchy*.
>
> (Hegel 1902: 163; emphasis in original)

Byron

Our most important literary sources for the early nineteenth century are the immensely popular works of Byron. His *Hebrew Melodies*[210] (1815; McGann 1980-1993), are concerned with the Babylonian Captivity, and incorporate Old Testament references throughout. The best known of these song-poems today is *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, or rather its opening verse:

> The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
> And his cohorts all gleaming in purple and gold;
> And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
> When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
>
> (*The Destruction of Sennacherib*: I: 1-4)

The poem describes the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army on the eve of their seemingly inevitable sack of Jerusalem. The sentiment of this and the other Hebrew Melodies is nationalist, and concentrates on the message that a nation dedicated to and loved by God can and must endure any enemy. This is a use of the Old Testament very much of its time: Blake's lyric for *Jerusalem* as an anthem of English nationalism dates to the same period (Blake 1979 (1804)). For Byron there was little to differentiate the oppression of the Assyrians and

that of the Babylonians, and in this he may have shared a perspective with many ancient authors (see Chapter 3). His *By the Rivers of Babylon We Sat Down and Wept*, closely based on Psalm 137 (see Chapter 3), emphasises resistance to those oppressors:

> While sadly we gazed on the river
> Which roll'd on in freedom below,
> They demanded the song: but, oh never
> That triumph the stranger shall know!
> May this right hand be wither'd forever,
> Ere it string our high harp for the foe!
>
> (*By the Rivers of Babylon We Sat Down and Wept*: II: 1-6)

This is to be expected, and is not a distortion of the psalm's message, but it is worth remembering that all authors do have a choice. Several biblical sources, most prominently the early part of Isaiah, counsel acceptance of God's punishment in the form of the Captivity, and advise the Israelites to build new lives for themselves in Babylon. *The Vision of Belshazzar* reprises an 1814 occasional piece, *To Belshazzar*[209], and covers the Daniel account of the Writing on the Wall. The subject of the Israelites' exile was a particularly poignant one for the romantic pessimist Byron, in whose eyes,

> the homeless Jews wandering in strange lands, whom not even death cannot reunite, are symbolic of man... Since slavery, exile and death have become synonymous with life, man can only be mourned, as in "Oh! Weep for those," "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept," and "By the waters of Babylon."
>
> (Gleckner 1967: 207-208)

Gleckner's characterisation rightly emphasises the tragic aspect of Byron's outlook. Next to that of Voltaire, his work seems overwrought and full of bathos. Both authors, however, were immensely popular in their own lifetimes, and often cited as defining examples of the great cultural movements of their time. Byron's work clearly struck a chord with a wide readership, and its sentiment can therefore be dismissed as entirely misrepresentative. Romanticism, perhaps Byron himself, brought a heavy seriousness into cultural life; one that Voltaire would have scorned, and whose milieu has fallen in and out of favour with modern scholars ever since, but one whose impact was no less real for that.

Byron's largest work on a Mesopotamian theme is the play *Sardanapalus*[216], for which his principle source is Diodorus. This was completed in 1821, and first performed 1834. The subject and its treatment have little in common with the *Hebrew Melodies*. Here Byron concentrates on the downfall of a flawed ruler, though his treatment is not entirely unsympathetic. Several other major productions were based on the *Sardanapalus* of Byron, including one, *Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime* (Delitzsch and Taglionis 1908), which came to play an important role in the German reception of Babylon, and which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

'Assyriana:' reception and consumption in mid-nineteenth century Europe

The European impact of the Assyrian discoveries of the 1840s was substantial, and certainly affected the representation of Babylon well before that city had itself been excavated. The most striking case is that of Edwin Long's *Babylonian Marriage Market*[251], of which more below. The publication and display strategies associated with these excavations have been discussed (Chapter 4), but other aspects of their impact belong properly in this chapter, where they feed into traditions of representation and imagination significantly removed from travellers' accounts or even the work of the excavators themselves. We begin, however, with Henry Layard. The majority of the sculptures and reliefs he had uncovered went to the British Museum, but some did find other homes. First, there is the set of jewellery, itself now held in the British Museum, that was produced for Enid Guest's wedding to Layard in 1869 from real Assyrian cylinder seals (Fig. 5.14), and second, the Nineveh Porch at Canford Manor, home of Layard's cousin, patron, from 1869 mother-in-law – and in her own right translator of the *Mabinogion* (Russell 1997: 9) – Lady Charlotte Guest. These two uses for the Assyrian discoveries testify eloquently to their meaning and worth socially. If the British Museum collections symbolised national greatness, those privately held did as much for their discoverer and his circle. John Malcolm Russell, who has studied the history of the Nineveh Porch and the papers of Charlotte Guest in detail, saw a significant difference in this respect, and drew conclusions on what the reliefs at Canford Manor did mean to their owner.

> Lady Charlotte's experience of the Nineveh marbles both parallels and contrasts with that of the British public. She appreciated their biblical and aesthetic value, but they also offered her the unique opportunity to compete with the national museums of England and France.
>
> (Russell 1997: 121)

This, of course, says a great deal about the wealth and social standing of Lady Charlotte and her husband Sir John Guest, a prominent industrialist. Russell is able to cite the owner's own comments on the use of the Nineveh Porch:

> Lady Charlotte envisaged it as "a beautiful and interesting object" and "as interesting a little spot of ground that Porch as any in England." Such an interesting object must be shown off and Lady Charlotte clearly enjoyed doing so, as evidenced by her numerous diary references to visits to the Porch by guests in 1853 and 1854.
>
> (Russell 1997: 121-122)

Lady Layard's jewellery could be said to fulfil a similar role: a talking point focussed on Henry Layard's status and success. It was the crowning glory of a trend for 'Assyriana,' some examples of which are also retained in the collections of the British Museum. The man to take this trend the furthest was the French artist Gustave Courbet, who in his personal fashions as much as his art is notable for having taken Mesopotamian inspiration. Courbet, referring to his own beard, noted that he possessed an "Assyrian profile," (Lundquist 1995: 177), and incorporated postures from Botta's Khorsabad reliefs into his own compositions on non-Mesopotamian subjects.

Seductions East and West: Babylon anthropomorphised

IOKANAAN Arrière ! Fille de Babylone! N'approchez pas de l'élu du Seigneur. Ta mère a rempli la terre du vin de ses iniquités, et le cri de ses péchés est arrivé aux oreilles de Dieu.

SALOME Parle encore, Iokanaan. Ta voix m'enivre.

IOKANAAN Back! Daughter of Babylon! Come not near the chosen of the Lord. Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities, and the cry of her sinning hath come up even to the ears of God.

SALOME Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as music to mine ear.

(Wilde, *Salome* 283-287; translation Wilde 1998 (1894))

The identification of Babylon with sin and amoral luxury is longstanding. The major influences here are Old Testament sources, but their compatibility with Greek representations of Achaemenid Persia can also be fairly said to have contributed to later attitudes to 'the East' as a whole. The moral meaning of biblical texts could even take it outside this geographical context, as in Spenser's conscious modelling of the *Faerie Queene*'s Duessa after the Whore of Babylon described in Revelation, and of Lucifera as the Daughter of Babylon, guilty of pride (Hankins 1945: 366). It comes as no surprise, then, that Babylon should be a popular subject in Orientalist art. The story of Salome, of course, has nothing to do with Babylon, and yet John the Baptist's reference here is not only simple and clear, but there is also a more than allegorical truth

in it. Salome and her real mother, Herodias, are indeed the kin of Revelation's Great Whore: neither are meaningful as individual characterisations, but both work as specific embodiments of a female type. Babylon and Salome are, throughout their literary careers, fatally seductive and corrupting to men. What makes Wilde's *Salome* so interesting is that the author, with Aubrey Beardsley, the work's illustrator (Fig. 5.15), confronts the reader (or audience – *Salome* is a play, but its notoriety preceded any performance and it was initially refused a licence for performance in England) with the fact that they too must to some extent be subject to the seduction, that the seduction is key to *Salome*'s appeal for consumption as a story. Wilde does this by devoting time and space to it, making Salome's seductions the heart of the play and emphasizing them far more than the virtue of the saint. More than this he sexualises the conclusion of the story, and turns John the Baptist's resistance to Salome into a macabre triumph for her as she kisses his severed head – "they say that love hath a bitter taste, but what matter? I have kissed thy mouth, Iokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth" (*Salome* 1066-1068; translation Wilde 1998 (1894)). This was Salome, but it could have been Lilith, Ishtar or Semiramis.

> Ancient goddesses have been the subject of both scholarly and popular fascination since the earliest days of archaeological discovery in Babylonia and Assyria. Exoticising fantasies of cultic prostitution and illicit sexual practices were woven around historically attested female deities in the scholarly literature, and these descriptions eventually became part of a larger imaginative picture of Oriental antiquity.
>
> (Bahrani 2001b: 141)

This is a type also represented in semi-mythologized Greco-Roman history: Livia, wife of Augustus, or Olympias, mother of Alexander. In the Homeric tradition their luxury is not as clear, or at least not as material, yet their function still exists. Here it is found not in Helen, who like all the *Iliad*'s mortal protagonists is a pawn of the gods, but in the Sirens or the nymph Calypso, Odysseus's resistance to whom is a demonstration of his great moral virtue as well as his cunning. When Babylon is anthropomorphized in art and literature, this is the category in which it is consistently placed. We can explore this idea further by looking at two Mesopotamian characters who were discussed in Chapter 3: Sardanapalus and Semiramis.

The stories of Sardanapalus and Semiramis have much in common. They both involve sexual deviancy and violence, power and the abuse of power. They also specifically involve the blurring of gender and sexuality. There is a rich literature on the European representation of Eastern man and Eastern woman, but they are as a rule treated as separate types in representation, and separate conclusions are drawn about them. As far as the representation of Babylon is concerned, however, they are not different types at all. Instead, they are both parts of a fantasy of seduction and transgression being played out in modern, male, upper class European minds. On this subject Anne McClintock's (1995) *Imperial Leather* is a key work, bringing together gender, sexuality, class and race in describing imperial discourse. McClintock looks at Victorian culture, identifying cultural taboos and boundaries and then looking at their transgression. She concentrates on the ways in which fantasies are played out

and constrained, and this often hidden tension is very relevant to the representation of characters like Sardanapalus and Semiramis.

The sexual transgressions of Sardanapalus and Semiramis are represented, in antiquity and modernity, as basically negative, Sardanapalus's entirely so. Semiramis is brave and cunning in her military career, but she abuses her power and her very success undermines the male kings of Mesopotamia – in classical Greek literature female intervention in war is reserved for immortals, as in Athene's participation in the *Iliad*, or treated as abhorrent, as in the case of the Amazons. Insofar as these characters carry an explicit lesson in modern paintings and plays, that lesson is about the dangers of such transgression. Rather than screening out such sin, however, nineteenth-century painters in particular seem to revel in it. Presented with an image such as Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus*[222] (Fig. 5.16), it is hard to deny that the artist dwells on the sexual transgressions, and that the viewer is encouraged to do the same. The public material plays a covert pornographic role, codified in just such a way as to be ideologically acceptable within a relatively prudish modern culture. This role is not simply a matter of the nudity of female figures found in many 'fall of Babylon' images, but rather the fantasy of transgression and sin for which they are ciphers. The feminised bisexual tyrant Sardanapalus and the masculinised, sadistic Semiramis represent everything forbidden, yet they and their behaviour are accessible because they are mediated or legitimated as culturally worthwhile by high culture and history. Such characters and their stories form a taboo-breaking aspect of a high culture created by and for rich, powerful, but socially

quite constrained European men, and this is the context in which their cultural significance makes most sense.

One important transgression of the taboo is missed as long as we treat the representation of men and women as distinct categories. These representations are laden with gender blurring and the reversal of traditional sexual roles and categories (as is also the case with Ishtar, analysed by Bahrani (Bahrani 2001b: 146)). Sardanapalus and Semiramis are part of the same, modern fantasy, and their representation ties in well with a more widely documented Victorian fascination with the androgyne (Busst 1967). In the representation of Babylon we see fantasies of transgression again and again, and we also see that there is a standard way of mediating them and making them acceptable in modern society. That mediation is the performance of a seduction. Sin and responsibility for sin are transferred away from upper class males both within the narratives presented and in the structures of their presentation. When the Sardanapalus story is presented as both a historical education and a moral lesson, for example, it can hardly be the fault of the producers for being faithful to history and morality, or of the audience if they witness all the sins of the ancient east. An active performance of fantasy can thus be played out as passive; part of the fantasy is that the modern audience are innocents confronted with wicked seductions. Simply by playing their passive role, moreover, they have implicitly resisted them. Wilde subverts this seduction/resistance dynamic in *Salome*, where the seduction is pushed to the fore, and where the denouement of the play mocks resistance to that seduction, rendering it ambiguous at best.

Edwin Long

Edwin Long's 1875 *Babylonian Marriage Market* (Fig. 5.17) is a representation of particular interest to archaeologists and Assyriologists, incorporating an enormous amount of detail sourced from the Assyrian collections of the British Museum. Meticulous use of the Assyrian reliefs is everywhere in evidence and giving the impression that it represents a major break with what has gone before, and that Long's painting is far more accurate and authentic a representation of Babylon than its predecessors. No doubt this is true at the level of decorative detail, Long using the closely related arts of Assyria rather than, e.g., the classical sources of the Flemish Tower of Babel images. In theme and narrative, however, Herodotus remains the source, and Long's choice of subject puts his work firmly into the category of Orientalist sexual exotica. There is truth in the statement that "the new archaeological approach signified a desire to engage more directly with the past and to recreate it more authentically than ever before" (Cowling 2004: 15), but this desire was realized in practice as an authentification of the fantastic. Just as Said argued with regard to Orientalist scholarship and art more generally, meticulous attention to detail in history painting could mask a lack of factual foundation for the overall subject and its subjective treatment in moral terms.

Conclusion: the experience and the idea

Chapter 3 discussed two quite distinct traditions on Babylon. Chapter 4 examined their conscious use in more-or-less confined situations, whereby specific aspects of a visitor's experience were related in their accounts to

specific aspects of the biblical and classical record. Time, repetition and selective borrowing all contributed to a process by which these become entangled, but this was frequently balanced by scholarly visitors such as Niebuhr and Rich, whose tendency to return to and compare their older sources did much to refresh and clarify the historiographic basis of the tradition. The sources discussed in this chapter develop in a different way, and their interrelation over time is as much a matter of narrative and theme as of historical detail. It is possible to identify the most popular and influential narratives and their biblical or classical roots, yet by the nineteenth century the overwhelming impression is of a single canon, rather than two separate and conflicting traditions. The connection is sin: the moral and sexual deviancy of Sardanapalus, Semiramis and Ishtar tie in quite comfortably with the despotism of Nebuchadnezzar, or the pride and greed of Nimrod. The distinction in anthropomorphisation as Babylon (lust) and Daughter of Babylon (pride) are not sufficiently strong to preserve the separation. In Wilde's Herodias and Salome, for example, the attributes are reversed. When ancient Assyrian material culture began arriving in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century its iconography was applied to themes from both the biblical and classical traditions, lending to both the credibility of history and the support of physical evidence. The impact of decipherment played a similar unifying and legitimating role. The discovery of the palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh and the decipherment and translation of its texts gave European scholars a credible historical Sardanapalus, while another Ninevite palace really was that of the biblical Sennacherib. An understanding of the chronological and familial relationship between the two gave new weight to the biblical and classical

accounts in equal measure. There may be a reflection of this in the travellers' accounts, where observations on the fulfilment of biblical prophecy were increasingly supplemented by discussion of Herodotus's description of the walls of Babylon and temple of Belus. This shift, however, could more convincingly be explained as the product of Herodotus's greater suitability to the types of question and investigation that became important for visitors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The performance of seduction and the moral meaning of Babylon in modern European culture ultimately become the elements which lend the greatest potency and relevance to Babylon's representation in the present. Sin is as near to a universal theme as could be imagined, and in terms of Babylon's enduring appeal as a cultural symbol this is enormously important. We seek the difference of the past, and yet it is recognition that fascinates. As Woolley put it, "the surprise which a visitor to a museum expresses at the age of a given object is in exact proportion to his recognition of the object's essential modernity – it is the surprise of one who sees his horizon suddenly opening out" (Woolley 1937 (1930): 15). This concise and elegant explanation of archaeology's appeal brings us to the very heart of the relationship between the academic study of the past and its treatment in other cultural forms. The recognition of the object's essential modernity, in this case, stems from the fact that the object, be it painting, play, poem or opera, actually is modern. To satisfy this appeal increasing empiricism is the last thing needed from travellers' accounts (as Voltaire recognised), yet as Chapter 4 demonstrates this occurs at just the same time. It is as this conflict develops that the worlds of

antiquarian/historical/archaeological study and artistic representation truly diverge. It was not, for example, a problem faced by Athanasius Kircher, but his inclusion of Pietro Della Valle's pictures of Tell Babil is a part of its genesis. The consolidation and consequences of this change will be seen more clearly as we move into Chapter 6, and the German archaeological excavations at Babylon.

Chapter 6: The German Experience

The Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and German excavations at Babylon

The excavation of Babylon and its immediate reception in Germany are central to this thesis. They represent moments of discovery and interpretation of the physical city itself, and therefore a substantial change in the relationship between Babylon and the present. By the end of 1899 Robert Koldewey (Fig. 6.1) had exposed a substantial, visually memorable area of the site. Meanwhile in Berlin, the figure of Friedrich Delitzsch (Fig. 6.2) rose to great prominence as the academic authority on Babylon, and as its chief publicist. This chapter examines the roles of individuals and institutions in the imperial German archaeological experience of Babylon, and the relationship between that experience and older forms of knowledge and representation. How do the histories of representation covered in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 affect the form, aims and outcomes of the archaeological excavation of Babylon?

It would be misleading to draw too many parallels between the roles of Koldewey in Babylonia and Germany and of Austen Henry Layard in Assyria and England fifty years earlier. Crucially, Layard himself took charge of the promotion of his excavations to the British public (Layard 1849a; 1852; 1853b[236]), as well as producing the more lavish *Monuments of Nineveh* (Layard 1849b; 1853a), aimed at specialists and patrons (see Chapter 4). He was better

known, if not more respected academically, than his peers in the subject, and through his willingness to communicate with the public became the defining figure in both the excavation and English reception of Assyria. Koldewey, by contrast, took little interest in fame in Berlin, and in any case worked in a different academic system within which, whatever his achievements in Mesopotamia, it is hard to imagine his ever having the opportunity to supplant Delitzsch's role at home. This point will be returned to, as it comes to represent a significant change in the structure and focus of archaeology in the region. First, however, some discussion of Koldewey, Delitzsch and the culture within which they worked is needed.

Koldewey

Robert Koldewey's background was in art and architecture, which he had taught, and he had excavation experience in Italy, Sicily, the Aegean and Syria prior to his work at Babylon. He was not of particularly high academic standing, and in this respect might even have been considered under-qualified for the task eventually allotted to him. He can be seen as the originator of that project, however, if not a great player in engineering the conditions in which it would receive substantial support. He had made two previous visits to the area of Babylon and had collected examples of the glazed bricks found on the surface. The second of these trips, in 1897-1898, was made with Eduard Sachau (Rogers 1900: 247), a Berlin University Orientalist and the translator of Al-Biruni used in Chapter 5 of this thesis (Sachau 1879). The report on this preliminary exploration is Sachau's (Sachau 1900). The bricks proved important in Koldewey's efforts to gain support for the excavations, but the processes

leading toward a large German archaeological project in Mesopotamia were really happening independently of him. At this time the priorities of the young Germany were mixed, but a general doctrine of the need to strengthen the republic through expansion, *Weltmachtpolitik* and a stake as a major imperial power were broadly agreed upon:

> While the proclamation of the "Deutsches Reich" in 1871 can be seen as a logical step in economic development and Prussian imperialism, the new role as a major power in the middle of Europe had to be filled and the idea of a German nation was still not very widespread. It was common belief, anyway, that Germany's new position as a continental power was to last only if Germany was active also outside Europe in executing world-power policy ("Weltmachtpolitik")... This was less a question of prestige, which played a role nevertheless, than of economic rationale.
>
> (Hauser 2001: 214)

Whether the priorities were economic strength or cultural identity as a power to match England and France, the power of a united Germany certainly needed to find material expression, and to be manifested in the world of culture. Nonetheless, the political centre in imperial Germany engaged with only a limited part of the German cultural sphere:

> By contrast with the situation in France, the main impetus to the growth of literature, art, and music in Germany came, broadly speaking, not from the largest city (Berlin) but from the various competing regional capitals; the one important sphere for which this did not hold true was modern scholarship and science.
>
> (Mommsen, W. J. 1995: 120)

The place of Oriental studies/Near Eastern archaeology in this latter category is informative in itself. It might be possible to make comparisons with French Imperial *savants*, but not with a scholarly culture based in *belles lettres*. Nor can an analogy be drawn with the English exploration of the Mesopotamian past, in which colonial administrators and gentleman adventurers had played such important roles. In the German case the key actors are non-aristocratic professionals, working for and from institutions. The social makeup of this group was largely middle class, liberal and protestant. Importantly, it is a group that aimed to contribute collectively to German national and imperial culture as their class prospered in industry and rose in social standing. Bismarck's careful maintenance of aristocratic – and particularly Prussian *Junker* – power (Williamson 1998 (1986): 53) was eroded by rapid industrialisation and the economic rise of the middle classes, and a bourgeoisie with strong desires for a major role in national culture emerged. Seen by its instigators, most crucially Bernhard von Bülow (Chancellor 1900-1909), as a tool for establishing domestic stability through national unity of purpose, *Weltpolitik* aimed to service these desires.

> [Von Bülow's] hope was that a 'world policy' of grand gestures and overblown phrases, with Wilhelm II playing the role of the nation's leader on the international stage, would appeal to the bourgeois parties, severely disenchanted with the government as they had become, and win back their support.
>
> (Mommsen, W. J. 1995: 151)

The Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft was founded with one such aim: archaeological acquisition, for Germany, in the Middle East, and particularly

within the weakening Ottoman Empire, which in broader political terms seemed at the time an area on which the latecomer on the imperial scene could focus and attempt to gain a foothold. It should be stressed that the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft was founded with acquisitions for the nation as a goal. It was modelled on the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum Society (a group formed by collectors aiming to acquire fine art for the state) (Bohrer 2003: 280), and was envisaged as performing a broadly equivalent function. The main contributors, listed in each issue of the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft*, were Kaiser Wilhelm II and major business figures, and these are the interests that carried the most weight within the society. The picture is complicated, however, by that part of the membership based more on scholarly interest than on any substantial ability to invest:

> The founding of the DOG consolidated a number of interests and power-bases, bringing a structure derived from a purchasing syndicate for artworks to the more nebulous engagements of foreign archaeology. Local pastors, scholars, connoisseurs, and parvenus coexisted in a single organisation run by captains of industry and bank directors. Not least among the members of the DOG were those with direct business ties to the Middle East, notably the German banking and railroad interests headquartered in Constantinople, whose project for a "Baghdad-Bahn" loomed throughout the period.
>
> (Bohrer 2003: 280)

Although this group was diverse, its early drive and purpose were apparently unified. The interests of scholars, industrialists and the Kaiser could all be served by a large, prestigious German excavation project in the Near East, just

at the time Robert Koldewey was looking for support for his interest in Babylon. Koldewey's glazed bricks certainly helped: as he put it,

> Die eigenartige Schönheit und die kunsthistorische Wichtigkeit dieser Stücke, die der damalige Generaldirektor der Königlichen Museen, Exz. R. Schöne, richtig bewertete, trugen mit zu dem Entschlusse bei, die Hauptstadt des baylonischen Weltreiches auszugraben.
>
> The peculiar beauty of these fragments and their importance for the history of art was duly recognised by His Excellency R. Schöne, who was then Director-General of the Royal Museums, and this strengthened our decision to excavate the capital of the world empire of Babylonia.
>
> (Koldewey 1913: iv; Koldewey 1914: vi).

This, however, is only a guarded way of saying that they suggested something visually spectacular would emerge from an excavation, and that visually impressive museum pieces were what the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft sought. This position may be less mercenary than it appears to the present-day reader. Many scholars held that a fairly direct relationship existed between quality of aesthetic production and historical significance or state of cultural development of a society (Haskell 1993: 217-235; also Wengrow 1999: 599, noting the significance of ceramics from the massive *Délégation Française en Perse* excavations at Susa, contemporary with Koldewey's work at Babylon). The belief can be traced directly to Winckelmann, as can the position of classical Greek art as the benchmark for perfection in the aesthetic sphere (cf. Chapter 7). Moreover, the name of Babylon was undoubtedly a great lure, and surely the only project that could match the discovery of Nineveh for prestige and public

interest. On the other hand, it presented a risk in two respects. First, although the general area of ancient Babylon was clear, it was not apparent prior to Koldewey's excavations what was and was not Babylon itself. Claudius Rich had already failed to find the massive city wall described by Herodotus, for example (Rich 1818), and neither Layard nor Botta had managed to replicate their successes in Assyria here. Second, no excavation in southern Mesopotamia had yet proved satisfactory in terms of exposing architecture. The decision to support Koldewey only made sense if one assumed he would be successful. Perhaps his sponsors did, but in reality the young Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft was taking an expensive gamble. Fortunately the gamble paid off, and Koldewey's work was a success from the very beginning.

The uncovering of the Processional Way was a remarkable achievement, made all the more spectacular from the point of view of reception by its visual aspect. One sense in which the excavations at Babylon represent a landmark in the study of ancient Mesopotamian art is to be found in the colourful brickwork of the Processional Way itself. Although small patches of red and black on the Assyrian reliefs suggested that these had been painted, and during the 1880s Marcel and Jane Dieulafoy had revealed polychrome bricks at Susa (Dieulafoy 1887; 1888), Koldewey nonetheless uncovered the first reliefs in the Mesopotamian heartland whose colouration survived (Bohrer 2003: 226), and still some of the most impressive. From the perspective of the history of archaeology however, no single discovery, even that of Babylon itself, is as important as Koldewey's methodological contribution.

The excavations at Babylon set a number of methodological precedents that affect the development of professional archaeology. The standards of excavation and of recording were ahead of their time in Mesopotamia and beyond: according to Seton Lloyd the excavators worked "with a patience and methodical ingenuity which set an entirely new standard for the conduct of archaeological excavations in all parts of the world" (Lloyd 1980 (1947): 174). This point deserves attention, because it cannot easily be seen as a necessary consequence of the cultural milieu in which the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft was formed and the expedition conceived. What German archaeologists did at Babylon and Ashur is almost unfathomable from the point of view of what was expected of them in Berlin. They had been engaged, bluntly put, to dig for treasure: monumental art and inscribed tablets were the concerns of their patrons, who sought national glory, and of the academic establishment in Berlin, whose expertise lay in the study of cuneiform texts, and for whom archaeology was still primarily thought of as a means of accessing this material. By contrast, Koldewey is remembered for developing excavation techniques that furthered neither of these causes, and even hindered the large-scale rapid acquisition of tablets and art. In much the same way it becomes easy to forget, looking at Koldewey's long stay at Babylon, his apparently good relationship with the local population and his diffidence regarding public life in Germany, that he had been sent to Mesopotamia for the glory of Empire. Koldewey keeps a continent between himself and the German imperialists, quietly resisting the power-play and atavism of the system his work fed. The full consequences of his political disengagement are more complicated than this however, and will be examined later in this chapter.

Koldewey at Babylon

Koldewey's work at Babylon forms the basis of our archaeological understanding of the site today, and his importance in the development of excavation methods in Mesopotamia is enormous (Strommenger and Stucky 1977: 10). Koldewey provides a chronology of the excavations in the preface of his 1913 and 1914 publications. Excavations were concentrated in a scatter along the east bank of the river, in the very centre of the city's walled enclosure (Fig. 6.3).

Koldewey had used the glazed bricks found at the site to help make the case for excavation, and unsurprisingly he concentrated first on their source. He aimed, in any case, to focus on the city's centre, where it was presumed that the most important palaces and temples were to be found. Babylon shares with most other early Mesopotamian excavations a concentration on large buildings and centres to the exclusion of ordinary residential areas. The latter have only received greater attention in the mid-late twentieth century as research priorities have shifted away from elite political history and toward broader social and economic questions. The scale of earlier excavations relative to their successors, however, means that Mesopotamian archaeologists today inherit a strong tradition of elite focus in the research materials they have available to work with. In addition, the particular interests of Koldewey and Andrae were in architectural history, meaning the history of monumental architecture. All this said, some private houses were excavated at Babylon, and perhaps their inclusion at all here is more remarkable than their exclusion from early Mesopotamian excavations in general.

The ability to excavate these houses at all was owed, like the project's success in general, to the technical achievement of the Babylon excavations in successfully tracing and revealing mud-brick architecture. The development of these techniques benefitted Koldewey as well as posterity, since unlike their counterparts in Assyria even the grandest buildings in Babylonia were constructed of mud-brick. Pollock makes an interesting point on this subject: in her description, "With the aid of local workmen, whose modern homes were constructed of mud brick, they succeeded in mastering the necessary skills, which have formed an integral part of Mesopotamian archaeologists' technical repertoire ever since" (Pollock 1999: 17). The probability that some of the credit for coming up with, as well as practising and refining, the technique should go to the local workmen is worth considering, although predictably hard to confirm – these workers, never prominent and rarely named even in the personal, travelogue style of Layard, are even more elusive in Koldewey's writing, although they do appear in Walter Andrae's paintings[260] (Andrae and Boehmer 1989; Fig. 6.4) and some site photographs. There are other occasions when his interpretation is explicitly informed by his own experience of living in Babylon, for example on practical matters such as building layout, where he noted that,

> So wie an jedem der großen Höfe immer im Süden ein besonders großer Raum liegt, so hat auch jeder der kleinen Haushöfe im Süden den Hauptraum. Dieser wird so der angenehmste im ganzen Hause. Er liegt fast den ganzen Tag im Schatten. In dem seltsamen Klima von Babylonien wird es verständlich, wenn man bei der Einrichtung des Hauses nur den Sommer und die Hitze in Betracht zieht... [W]ir haben Maxima

von 49½ Grad Celsius im Schatten und 66 Grad in der Sonne.beobachtet. Die Hitze dauert dabei auffallend viele Stunden am Tag an... Der Regen ist höchst unbedeutend. Ich glaube, wenn man alle Stunden im Jahr, wo es, wenn auch nur wenige Tropfen, regnet, zusammenenzählt, kommt man kaum auf 6 oder 8 Tage.

[I]n all the great courts the largest buildings lay to the south, so in each of these houses the principal chamber lay on the south side of the court; and this must have been the pleasantest part of the whole house, as it lay in shadow almost all day. Owing to the peculiar climate of Babylon it is obvious that in laying out a house, only the summer and the heat would be taken into consideration... We have observed a maximum of 49½ grades Celsius in the shade, and 66 in the sun, and the heat lasts for many hours of the day... Rain is very scanty. I believe if all the hours in the whole year in which there were more than a few drops of rain were reckoned up, they would barely amount to 7 [sic] or 8 days.

(Koldewey 1913: 72-74; Koldewey 1914: 73-74)

This attention to the weather is also to be found in Koldewey's frequent reports in the *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, which often end with a short note on climate and environmental conditions. In a similar vein he questions the commonplace that Babylonia is an obvious and particularly easy place for astronomy to develop based on his own experience:

Daß das Dach eines solchen Hochtempels [i.e. Etemenanki] dem babylonischen Astronomen einen willkommenen Standplatz bot, ist leicht einzusehen. Nötig hatte er's , sich über den brütenden Dunstkreis der ebene zu erheben. Bei ihrer großen Trockenheit ist die Luft auf weitere Entfernungen fast stets unsichtig, der Horizont bis auf 10 oder 20 Grad hinauf ein düsterer Ring von Staub, in welchem auch Mond und Sonne oft seltsam zerrissene Formen annehmen, wenn man sie überhaupt beobachten kann... Die manchmal gerühmte Klarheit des Babylonischen Himmels ist größtenteils

> eine Fiktion von Reisenden, die den europäischen Nachthimmel kaum anders als bei brennenden Großstadtlaternen zu beobachten pflegen.
>
> It is obvious that the roof of so lofty a temple [i.e. Etemenanki] would be welcomed by Babylonian astronomers as a platform for their observations. It would be necessary for them to be raised above the thick atmosphere of the plain. Owing to excessive dryness, the air is almost opaque at a distance, and the horizon up to a height of 10 or 20 grades is a dusky circle of dust, through which the sun and moon often assume torn and distorted forms, if their setting can be seen at all... The greatly-renowned clearness of the Babylonian sky is largely a fiction of European travellers, who are rarely accustomed to observe the night sky of Europe without the intervention of city lights.
>
> (Koldewey 1913: 192; Koldewey 1914: 195-196)

Koldewey's main interest, owing to his own acadmemic and professional background, was in Babylon's architecture, and one respect in which Babylon certainly did live up to its reputation was palatial opulence, at least in terms of sheer scale. Describing the palaces (of which there are three: the 'Southern' (main), 'Northern' and 'Summer' palaces), Oates notes that,

> The scale of these buildings is truly grandiose and difficult to imagine from the plans alone. It may perhaps help comparison to note that the whole of the great walled acropolis of Tiryns in Greece could be contained comfortably within the Southern Palace, while Nebuchadrezzar's throne room (52 x 17 m) compares not unfavourably with the Gallery of Mirrors at Versailles (73 x 10.4 m).
>
> (Oates 1986: 152)

Unlike these comparators, of course, the Babylonian ruins are of a type that makes their original state difficult to imagine at all. Photographs from the

German excavations, however, provided a glimpse of the city in a form much more comprehensible to the non-archaeologists, as their exposure of the architecture covered large areas and often revealed high standing walls (Fig. 6.5). The recording of these standing remains was excellent, although even greater care was taken later at Assur, where Andrae performed stratigraphic soundings for the first time in Mesopotamian archaeology (Pollock 1999: 19). Despite these exposures, however, the process of excavation was inevitably a demystifying one in some ways: good for archaeological and historical knowledge, but not necessarily for the romantic. With Koldewey's confirmation of what Rich had first observed almost a century earlier, Babylon physically shrinks:

> In fact, it was natural that several of the early travellers should have regarded the whole complex of ruins, which they saw still standing along their road to Baghdad, as parts of the ancient city; and it is not surprising that some of the earlier excavators should have fallen under a similar illusion so far as the area between Bâbil and El-Birs is concerned. The famous description of Herodotus, and the accounts other classical writers have left us of the city's size, tended to foster this conviction; and, although the centre of Babylon was identified correctly enough, the size of the city's area was greatly exaggerated. Babylon had cast her spell upon mankind, and it has taken sixteen years of patient and continuous excavation to undermine this stubborn belief.
>
> (King 1919: 15)

King's phrase is interesting, and captures an aspect of Koldewey's work that is of particular relevance in terms of representation: a scholarly thoroughness and detachment brought to bear on this most romanticized of ancient cities. This is key to the narrative of Babylon promoted by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft,

and by Koldewey himself in his own publications. "But," as King goes on to note, "in the process of shrinkage, and as accurate knowledge has gradually given place to conjecture, the old spell has reappeared unchanged" (King 1919: 15). He refers here to the archaeological questions excavations had left unanswered, but also to the survival of Babylon's mystique and of the biblical and classical narratives associated with it. Not least of the reasons for his view is that even in the early twentieth century, with a full-scale excavation, decipherment of cuneiform scripts and languages and the translation of Akkadian texts in particular at an advanced stage and a climate in which a literal adherence to biblical accounts was no longer the only available option when discussing them academically, research still did little to directly contradict the history of Daniel, the prophecy of Isaiah and Jeremiah, nor even the physical descriptions of parts of the city found in Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, Strabo, Philo of Byzantium[48] or Pliny the Elder. Koldewey could offer strong candidates for both the Tower of Babel as Etemenanki, a description of which had already been found by George Smith (Budge 1920: 300-303), and the Hanging Gardens as the 'Vaulted Building' in the north-eastern corner of the Southern Palace, of which Koldewey writes,

> Daß der Nachweis im einzelnen auf Schwierigkeiten störßt, wird niemanden wundern, der mehr als einmal antike Realberichte mit dem Befunden der Gegenwart in Übereinstimmung zu bringen hatte. Man kann immer froh sein, wenn die Hauptsachen stimmen!
>
> That the identification when studied in detail bristles with difficulties, will surprise no one who has more than once had to bring ancient statements of facts into accordance

> with discoveries of the present day. We can always rejoice when they agree in the main points.
>
> (Koldewey 1913: 95; Koldewey 1914: 95-96)

The agreement to which Koldewey refers is the unusual presence of stone vaulted arches, agreeing particularly with the account of Diodorus (*Bibliotheke Historica* II. x. 1-6), but also with Strabo (*Geography* XVI. i. 5) and Quintus Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander*[29] V. i. 5). There is also a candidate for Ctesias's picture of Semiramis in the 'Persian Building,' where Koldewey interpreted the only two human figures seen in relief at Babylon (as part of a hunting scene) as Ninus and Semiramis (Koldewey 1914: 130). And although the Herodotus description of the walls of Babylon makes them too long and gives an impossible, probably rhetorical, hundred gates (cf. Chapter 3), his account of their thickness at least was supported by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft's findings, supplementing the existing awareness that his description of bricks interspersed with layers of reed matting had already been confirmed by European travellers (cf. Chapter 4). As for the biblical descriptions, it remains true that their content is not often of the type that an archaeological investigation would have a great bearing on, since they contain virtually no physical description of the city. The most significant exception is Genesis, where Nimrod's ambition does indeed echo that of Nebuchadnezzar's cylinder at Etemenanki. The latter includes the phrase "To raise up the top of Etemenanki to rival heaven, I laid to my hand" (Koldewey 1914: 195). Even this, of course, is not sufficiently specific to constrain interpretation; it requires only the existence of any high temple or ziggurat in the city. It is difficult and uncommon for an archaeological investigation of any kind to refute a personal

narrative such as the career of Daniel, who is listed as a historical individual alongside Nebuchadnezzar in the writings of early-twentieth century Mesopotamian archaeologists, including Koldewey. This level of compatibility is enough to prompt further speculation. Koldewey felt it obvious that the dragon associated with Marduk (Fig. 6.6) related to Bel and the Serpent and might even provide a historical basis for its narrative:

> ...das berühmte und bevorzugte Tier von Babylon, dieses „Drache von Babylon". Die bekannte Erzählung „vom Drachen zu Babel" in den Apokryphen paßt ausgezeichnet in den Rahmen dieser Tatsachen. Man kann sich wohl vorstellen, daß die Priester von Esagila sich dort ein ähnliches Tier, ein Reptil, vielleicht einem Arval, der in dieser Gegend vorkommt, hielten und ihn im Halbdunkel eines Tempelraumes als einen lebendigen Sirrusch sehen ließen. Zu werwundern wäre dabei jedenfalls nicht, wenn dieser die ihm von Daniel zubereiteten Küchlein aus Haaren und Asphalt nicht vertragen konnte.
>
> This 'dragon of Babylon' was the far-famed animal of Babylon, and fits in admirably with the well-known story in the Apocrypha of Bel and the Dragon [19]. One may easily surmise that the priests of Esagila kept some reptile, possibly an arval, which is found in this neighbourhood, and exhibited it in the semi-darkness of a temple chamber as a living sirrush. In this case there would be small cause for wonder that the creature did not survive the concoction of hair and bitumen administered to it by Daniel.
>
> (Koldewey 1913: 46; Koldewey 1914: 46)

The other animals represented in the glazed bricks of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way are bulls (associated with Adad, or, according to Koldewey, Ramman (Koldewey 1914: 46) – another name for the same god) and lions (associated with Ishtar). Given the excavators' expectations the latter could also

be associated with Daniel; indeed, Daniel in the lions' den had been a popular theme in mid-late nineteenth-century European painting. Koldewey shows himself to be a more cautious interpreter than this, however. As regards the lions in relief, he simply notes that "The lion, the animal of Ishtar, was so favourite a subject at all times in Babylonian art that its rich and lavish employment at the main gate of Babylon, the Ishtar Gate, is by no means abnormal" (Koldewey 1914: 46). Even faced with the decidedly abnormal basalt 'Lion of Babylon', which had already been suggested as a monument to the event raised after Daniel became governor of Babylon (Keppel 1827: 123, cf. Myers 1875[250]: 211), Koldewey still resists endorsing the interpretation:

> Die einen sehen darin Daniel in der Löwengrube, die andern Babylonien über dem besiegten Ägypten. Aber die Darstellung eines konkreten Vorgangs ist um die Zeit durchaus nur Sache des Reliefs, und, dem Kunstwerk wine abstracte Idee zugrunde zu legen, der babylonischen Kunst fremd.
>
> Some see in it Daniel in the lions' den, and others Babylonia above defeated Egypt. But a concrete past is throughout this period never represented otherwise than in reliefs, and, on the other hand, it is foreign to Babylonian art to take as a basis the representation of an abstract idea.
>
> (Koldewey 1913: 159; Koldewey 1914: 160-162)

These are not the only interpretations Koldewey has to dismiss. He also mentions a local tradition attached to the Lion:

[Re: The left hand of the man being trampled by the lion] Diese ist ihm von abergläubischen Händen abgehauen. Auch finden sich immer wieder an ihm die Spuren von Flintenkugeln und von Steinen, die gegen ihn geschlendert werden; denn er gilt als ein gefürchteter „Dschin". Auf der einen Seite haben ihm die Araber ein tiefes, jetzt mit Zement ausgefülltes Loch in seine Flanke gehauen, und das hängt so zusammen: Es kam einmal ein Europäer, erkundigte sich schon vorher nach dem Löwen, den er aus der Literatur wohl kennen konnte, und denn ihm die Araber auch ziegten. Er besah ihn genau, suchte aus den vielen kleinen Löchern, die der Basalt zeigt, das richtige aus, steckte einen Schlüssel hinein, drehte um und hatte dann auf einmal die ganze Hand voll Goldstücke. Der scherzhafte Fremde ging weg arabisch sprach er nicht. Der gute Araber aber, um der Schätze habhaft zu werden, hämmerte besagtes Loch in den Löwen, was ihm eine ungeheure Mühe gemacht haben muß, denn der Stein ist von großer Festigkeit.

[The left hand of the man being trampled by the lion] has been chopped away by superstitious hands, and he is marked all over by the stones and flint balls that have been, and are still, flung at him; for he is regarded as the much-feared 'Djin.' On one side the Arabs have dug out a deep hole in his flanks, which is now filled with cement. The reason of this is as follows. A European once came here, and inquired about the lion, which he had probably read of in the books of earlier travellers. The Arabs showed it to him, and after looking at it attentively, he chose from among the small holes in the basalt the right one, into which he thrust a key and turned it, whereupon his hand was immediately filled with gold pieces. Having accomplished his practical joke, the traveller went his way, unable as he was to speak Arabic. The worthy Arabs, however, in order to render the treasure available, hammered this hole in the lion, which must have caused them immense labour, for the stone is extremely hard.

(Koldewey 1913: 159; Koldewey 1914: 160)

The story is meant to highlight the simplicity of those who recounted it, but now appears as a rather telling commentary on contemporary local perceptions of European travellers and archaeologists. The story makes a wonderful allegory, and it is a shame that those telling it could not see the Assyrian-themed silver casket with which Austen Henry Layard had been presented with the Freedom of the City of London in 1854 (*Illustrated London News* 1854; Fig. 6.7). The Europeans certainly did come with knowledge that could be used to convert Iraq's standing and buried monuments into capital, whether that capital was cultural, social, political, material or a combination of the four. The work of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft was intended very much as a continuation of this process, and Koldewey's differences from his predecessors are not so great that his work cannot be subjected to many of the same criticisms. Archaeological work in general is intimately bound up with possession, whether through the physical acquisition of objects or the accumulation (and in this case export) of knowledge. Maps and plans are important in this form of possession, but there is also a more personal side to the process, less imperial in motivation but arguably more so in fact. This is the possessiveness of scholarly obsession, whereby academic research generates feelings of propriety, ownership and jealousy. It is a sense of ownership for which it is possible to compete, but for which it was impossible for a provincial Ottoman town to compete with a well-funded research project from imperial Germany. Koldewey's work inevitably affected the status of local knowledge, both as a source for European visitors and, one must assume, locally as well. Moreover, his practical power and control of the site could be naturalised by his expertise and ownership of knowledge. There is nothing unusual or even particularly avoidable about these

processes in such an excavation, but their relationship to more formal and more planned narratives of imperial possession should be noted.

Koldewey's work, as he saw it, was only half-done at Babylon. He had worked for fifteen years at the site and exposed far more of it than any present-day excavation could, but much more remained unexplored. He had already made the site his life's work, and would gladly have devoted the rest of it to that work's continuation. His frustration should be taken seriously, and, given its place at the front of the most thorough description of Babylon ever undertaken, as a major preoccupation of its author (cf. Chapter 1). The preface was written at Babylon and is dated May 16, 1912, by which point war in Europe threatened. In April 1914 Gertrude Bell made "a brief visit to Babylon to pay homage to the work of her friend Professor Koldewey of Berlin before war brought such peaceable pleasantries to an end" (Winstone 2004 (1978): 215). War, of course, also brought an end to the excavations, and Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft fieldwork – indeed European fieldwork generally – was never to resume on the same scale (Nagel 1976: 69).

When Koldewey's project was still at an early stage Rogers had written admiringly that "The future work, which must continue for a number of years, is in good hands, for German patience and persistence will be certain to continue it to the end" (Rogers 1900: 248). The early twentieth century, however, was to prove destructive to stability and certainty of all kinds.

Delitzsch

For all his achievements, Koldewey was not the figure with whom Babylon came to be associated for the German public. This honour fell instead to Friedrich Delitzsch, director of the newly founded Vorderasiatische Abteilung (Near Eastern Section) of the Berlin museums. Delitzsch had risen to prominence within the academic system as a master of Assyriology. His work remains an important part of the subject's foundations, and he can be seen to be part of a movement that did as much for the study of ancient Near Eastern texts as the excavations at Babylon did for archaeological method: German philologists of Delitzch's generation produced the dictionaries, grammars and sign-lists that underpin the subject today, and Delitzsch's personal contribution to the study of both Akkadian and Sumerian was enormous (Delitzsch 1889b; 1912; 1914a; 1914b). His is also the generation from which the first great German teachers of Assyriology in America were drawn (Kucklick 1996). Additionally, Delitzsch had from an early date recognized and engaged with the potential for his subject to inform biblical studies (Delitzsch 1881[252]), and had produced a widely acclaimed and explicitly nationalist call for support of the newly founded Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in *Ex Oriente Lux! Ein Wort zur Förderung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*[258] (Delitzsch 1898).

Although already a respected scholar and professor, Delitzsch was a new arrival in Berlin in 1899, being appointed simultaneously to his museum post in the Vorderasiatische Abteilung and to a professorship at Berlin University. Again there is a parallel with Koldewey, in the sense that Delitzsch too benefited from a rise in the prominence of ancient Near Eastern studies driven by forces that

had little to do with his own work. Unlike Koldewey, however, Delitzsch became very much involved with these forces. He was uniquely able to do so: his position was a powerful and prestigious one, making him the obvious authority in both university and museum. With his involvement in the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft his influence spanned the full breadth of Near Eastern studies in Germany, from academic philology to the allocation of Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft funds. Given the great interest of Kaiser Wilhelm II in the ancient Near East, Delitzsch's position was seen as one of particular power.

Delitzsch's authority allowed him a privileged role in communicating ancient Mesopotamia to the public, a task he took to with great zeal. Bohrer argues that in this role he relied heavily on the historical precedents of France and England. His chosen vehicle for announcing Koldewey's early success (Delitzsch 1899) was the *Illustrierte Zeitung*, a journal designed to follow the format of the *Illustrated London News*. Austen Henry Layard had risen to fame in the pages of the latter, and the remarkable commercial success of *Nineveh and its Remains* owes something to the sustained and positive coverage the Assyrian excavations received in the *Illustrated London News*. Bohrer argues, however, that the approach was now out-of-date.

> Delitzsch's ecstatic article in the *Illustrierte Zeitung* [*IZ*] had appeared in a journal no longer dominant in its time. *IZ*'s close and intentional similarity to the *Illustrated London News* betrays its foundation in the technological and ideological norms of the mid-nineteenth century.
>
> (Bohrer 2003: 287)

The *Illustrated London News* itself continued to function as a popular and effective vehicle for communicating archaeological research to the public well into the twentieth century, publicising the work of Leonard Woolley and Max Mallowan in Iraq and playing its own part in the reception of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt (Bacon 1976). It is true that Delitzsch fared badly in the changed media environment. Poor judgement of the media climate was only one factor contributing to his loss of face and media victimization, however. The main element was 'Babel-Bibel' (see below), and the espousal of views that led to considerable religious controversy.

Babel-Bibel

From 1902 Delitzsch was to give a series of three high-profile lectures on the theme of *Babel und Bibel*[265] (Delitzsch 1906), aimed at demonstrating the relevance of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft's work to Germany. They were not designed to be particularly original in content, but to communicate scholarly research to a wider audience. Perhaps strangely, given Koldewey's recent successes, Delitzsch did not focus on the excavations at Babylon, but on his own strengths in philology.

The first lecture (Delitzsch 1902) was delivered on January 13, 1902 to a prestigious audience at the Singakademie, Berlin, and was repeated three weeks later at the imperial palace – the Emperor himself attended both performances. In the lecture Delitzsch outlined several ideas already current within the academic community, notably that the Bible was not the world's oldest

literature and that parts of the ancient Mesopotamian corpus bore close similarities to parts of the Old Testament (McCall 1990: 15). He went on to attribute a number of supposedly Hebrew innovations, including extant religious narratives and ritual practices, to Babylonia. He was not the first to express these ideas, but he did bring them to a broader (and much more difficult) audience:

> The school of Wellhausen dominated the German theology at the time, and its emphasis on a strictly literary/critical approach to an analysis of the Old Testament left little space for the new, predominantly historical evidence. The prevailing view of both the theological professors and the general public was that the monotheistic religion of the Jews was to be seen and understood as a truly unique phenomenon, growing directly out of the nomadic, primitive world of the tribes.
>
> (Larsen 1989b: 189)

The lecture was controversial, but did gain Delitzsch and Near Eastern studies a great deal of publicity. It certainly succeeded in its aim of showing the relevance of the field to modern German cultural life, for as Larsen points out Mesopotamian texts were now at the centre of a characteristically fin-de-siècle argument, given its intensity by the contemporary assumption that there was one overarching truth, to be found at any cost: this was not a question on which the parties concerned could agree to differ (Larsen 1989b: 200).

The next lecture was delayed in order to allow the situation to calm down somewhat. "Richard Schöne, Delitzsch's superior at the Berlin museums, providentially sent Delitzsch away from Berlin for most of the rest of the year"

(Bohrer 2003: 290) and the second lecture was not given until early 1903 (Delitzsch 1903). Once again he spoke at the Singakademie, and once again with the Kaiser in attendance. As if he had not already generated enough controversy, Delitzsch now took his assertions of the previous year significantly further. Supported by the Mesopotamian precedents for much Old Testament material, he explicitly denied that the Old Testament was divinely inspired revelation (Delitzsch 1903: 44-5). This was a position Delitzsch would stick to and later firmly entrench with his 1920-21 *Die grosse Täuschung* (*The Great Deception/Delusion*, referring to the status of the Old Testament as revelation) (Delitzsch 1920, 1921). The second lecture led to hostility from several quarters, and Delitzsch's views were the more reviled for apparently influencing the Kaiser. In his turn, the Emperor quickly distanced himself from the affair and from Delitzsch, writing an open letter advising that the latter should not dabble in theological matters to the president of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, Admiral Hollman,.

The third and final *Babel und Bibel* lecture came in October 1904 (Delitzsch 1905), and can be seen as something of a penance for the impudence with which Delitzsch had attacked the foundations of Christianity (and the very heart of Judaism, a separate point discussed below). This time the lecture was not even delivered in Berlin, but to the literary societies of Barmen and Cologne, and without the Kaiser. Delitzsch took it as an opportunity to assert himself as a good Christian: the mode of his previous lectures had been perceived as, and at times was, an antagonistic use of Assyriology to undermine the Bible. Now he attempted the reverse, pointing to common ground in the morality at the root of

both bodies of literature in an effort to situate his work as subsidiary to and supportive of Christian theology. Delitzsch's rise to fame and notoriety had in some ways cost him his academic freedom. There are few clearer examples to illustrate the extent to which favour outside the academy could affect lives and power structures within it, a point central to this study and whose frustrations, at least for an objectivist seeker of truth such as Delitzsch, are well expressed by James:

> Intellectuals have a 'double' ontology: however abstracted across space and time they may be in the practice of their work they remain constrained simultaneously as mortal, embodied subjects. They experience the cultural contradictions which arise out of being, at one level, intellectuals qua intellectuals conversing via the medium of print across space and time, while at another level being bound, as Durkheim would acknowledge, by the fact of being born into specific relations of blood, in a particular locale, at a particular time.
>
> (James 1996: 99)

Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime

In the wake of Babel-Bibel, a more traditional emphasis in the representation of the Mesopotamian past seemed essential to the Society. The result was an opera, *Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime* (Delitzsch and Taglionis 1908), recently studied in detail by Bohrer (2003). This hybrid production, incorporating a range of influences from Biblical narratives to nineteenth-century romanticism to the recent excavations of Koldewey at Babylon and Walter Andrae at Ashur, is a particularly interesting example of the interaction

of archaeological and non-archaeological understandings of the past, presenting in microcosm many of the processes with which this project is concerned.

Celebrating ten years of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (Renger 1999a: 1), *Sardanapal* was supposed to present a vision of Mesopotamia as accurate as modern scholarship allowed. Even the opera's title, however, suggests something more complex. An up-to-date title would have been *Assurbanipal* (Ashurbanipal), referring to the late Neo-Assyrian king at the time unproblematically identified with the legendary Sardanapalus. Neither the name nor the story of Sardanapalus have any root in modern archaeology or Assyriology; rather they first appear in the *Persica* of Ctesias, reproduced in the *Bibliotheke Historica* of Diodorus. Ctesias's ancient description (*Bibliotheke Historica* II: 23), This description, epitomizing the decay of a powerful pagan empire, provided fuel for the romanticist imagination. Sardanapalus had become a particularly popular theme in the nineteenth century, the most famous representations being Byron's play *Sardanapalus* (1821) and Delacroix's 1827-8 painting *The Death of Sardanapalus*. In using both the theme and the name the Berlin production recalls this trend, and attempts to recapture its success, removed from the controversies of Babel-Bibel.

There is no reason to imagine that Ctesias was considered a more reliable source in 1908 than today. In a late-nineteenth century translation Gilmore points out that "though the ancients generally adopted Ktesias' chronological scheme, they had a low opinion of his veracity" (Gilmore 1888: 3; cf. the opinion of Plutarch, Chapter 3, this thesis). Once the decision to follow the

Sardanapalus story has been made, the Mesopotamia of archaeology and Assyriology becomes at best a source of visual detail for an understanding of the Mesopotamian past that is already established. Even the focus on Babylon is subservient to this aim. Although the source of Ctesias's description is ambiguous (see Chapter 3), Sardanapalus is for modern purposes a king of Nineveh. The sets of *Sardanapal*, however, aim to create a Nineveh that is also Babylon, incorporating detail from the site and certainly aiming to resonate with German archaeological achievements at Babylon rather than those of the English and French at Khorsabad, Nimrud and Nineveh. If an Assyrian city is intended to be associated with the production it is Ashur, excavated by Andrae. Andrae's sketches[267], commissioned for the opera while he was still in Iraq, were one of the major visual sources for *Sardanapal*, much to Andrae's own astonishment: as he put it, "I almost fell over when my little coloured impressions appeared on the vast stage of the opera" (Andrae 1961: 181, translated in Bohrer 2003: 300).

It was argued in Chapter 2 that all our representations of Mesopotamia are in some sense overviews or maps – that we are not walking in the city but viewing it from above. It is in this context that the theme of Sardanapalus takes on its importance for archaeologists. The audience of *Sardanapal* were not presented with an event that happened to take place in Mesopotamia, but to an epitome of Mesopotamia itself. Sardanapalus is *the* Assyrian king and the epitome of Assyria itself. In one respect this shows great authenticity, being entirely faithful to the narrative aims of the Greek original (cf. Chapter 3). The problem is that for all the attention lavished on detail to legitimate the opera as

historically accurate (taken to extremes: as a philologist, Delitzsch required accuracy in the cuneiform inscriptions used in the play), what is being legitimated is not that detail but the identity of Sardanapalus, an identity not substantially different to the king described by Ctesias. To follow the analogy of a map, it is as if a cartographer has carefully laid out the gridlines, scales and keys before adding a series of random shapes to it, and claiming it is a map of the world on the basis of its very authentic frame.

The strategy works very well. In the absence of more information the map seems quite acceptable – its internal coherence argues for its accuracy. This was the case with the academically sanctioned representation of Mesopotamia, and *Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime* received positive reviews as an accurate representation of ancient Mesopotamia (Bohrer 2003: 303).

The Berlin reconstructions, 1927-1930

Expertise in architecture is a long-standing strength of German archaeology, and the attention paid to architecture is certainly a striking feature of the Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft's work in Mesopotamia. Robert Koldewey and Ludwig Borchardt had both worked with the architect Wilhelm Dörpfeld (Nagel 1976: 57), and Walter Andrae also had architectural training. Through Andrae's drawings and reconstructions in particular an expertise and passionate interest is readily apparent. It is fitting, then, that his work should culminate in one of the most remarkable architectural reconstructions ever accomplished: the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way of Babylon in Berlin, opened in October 1930 (Nagel 1976: 69). Monumental though it is, the enormous scale of the end

product (the reconstructed gate is over 14 metres high, the section of the Processional Way reconstructed 30 metres in length on both sides) is itself entirely dwarfed by that of the work behind it. Wherever possible Andrae's team used original bricks for the reconstruction. The colouration of these had survived excellently, but they were nonetheless fragmentary and in need of desalination treatment once excavated. The almost industrial-scale desalination (Fig. 6.8) and the daunting work of matching fragments with their original neighbours (in fact, into their original patterns – the repetition of animal forms, originally produced from the same moulds, helped reproduce them accurately, but often prevented the identification of a particular paw with one of many identical lions, for example), was accompanied by the production of a special kiln to make the modern bricks replacing missing areas as authentic in appearance as possible.

The first sign of Andrae's interest in this project is a short publication in the *Mitteilungen der Deutscher Orient-Gesellschaft* on the glazed bricks, written in December 1901 and published in May 1902 (Andrae 1902). Here Andrae presents two isometric exploded diagrams showing the system of signs on the top and bottom surfaces of the bricks used to ensure that they were correctly fitted together. Later this would become a practical and logistical concern for Andrae himself. Prior to the First World War Andrae worked in Iraq. Having worked under Koldewey at Babylon and been given experience of direction there as well as at Birs Nimrud and Fara in 1901 and 1902, he directed excavations at Qalat Sherqat, ancient Ashur, between 1903 and 1914. A proportion of the excavated material from this site was shipped back to Europe

– albeit only as far as Lisbon, where it was confiscated when Portugal entered the war against Germany – while the rest was sent to Istanbul according to an agreement made with the Ottoman antiquities authorities when excavation permits were issued (Klengel-Brandt 1995: 18). The excavated material from Babylon stayed in Iraq for the duration of the war, thus quickly falling under British control. A 1915 portrait by J. Walter-Kurau shows Andrae standing in front of one of the lions from the Processional Way. This initially seems anachronistic, but on closer inspection Andrae's own epigram can be seen in the lower-right corner, above Walter-Kurau's signature, revealing that Andrae was posing in front of his own painting. The initial impression is certainly that Andrae is standing in front of the relief itself, however, and but for the date one would assume that the Berlin reconstructions already existed. In fact it took a further eight years after the war for Germany, principally through the efforts of Andrae, to recover the material from Iraq and Portugal. He succeeded in both cases in 1926-1927, when the Portugese government accepted an exchange for other material from the Berlin Museums, while Gertrude Bell approached the Vorderasiatisches Abteilung offering to return the material from Babylon (Andrae 1927a; 1927b). Andrae's series of drafts for the reconstructions are dated 1927 (Fig. 6.9). Andrae became Director of the Vorderasiatische Abteilung in 1928 (which officially became the Vorderasiatische Museum not with the 1927-1928 move into the Pergamon Museum, but later, in 1953 (Crüsemann 2000: 3)), and presided over the two-year process of desalinating and reconstructing the Babylonian reliefs.

The finished reconstructions (Fig. 1.2) are a triumph. Not only visually powerful, they also allow the museum visitor, through reference to smaller architectural models[263] (Figs. 6.10) to gain a sense of the place and scale of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way in their original contexts. Before 1930, however, there was no public display of Mesopotamian artefacts in Berlin at all, and between 1930 and 1934 the Vorderasiatische Abteilung consisted of only three rooms, the other thirteen opening in 1934 (Nagel 1976: 69). This is an important contrast with England and France, not only because of the greater time-lag itself, but also because in these countries the peak of public interest had coincided with the arrival and display of Mesopotamian antiquities, as opposed to their actual period of excavation. Andrae's reconstruction was classically imperial in its demonstration of Germany's ability to understand and own an ancient empire. Transporting, enclosing and explaining the grandest monuments of another culture, the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way reconstructions signified imperial possession and in this sense were not unique at all.

The Vorderasiatisches Abteilung's reconstructions and collections from Mesopotamia would have been highly appropriate to Germany's nascent imperial culture; however, they were overtaken by world events. By the time of their construction and opening Germany had been weakened, impoverished and rendered politically volatile by the First World War and the impossible reparations required by the Treaty of Versailles. The stately permanence and paternalistic confidence of the universal museums so befitting a nineteenth-century European empire seems anachronistic in this context. This could be said

of the entirety of Berlin's Museumsinsel, whose plans had been laid prior to the First World War. This state was not to last: after 1933 the Nazi government had every use for symbols of national strength and could incorporate classicism into its totalitarian and anti-intellectual aesthetic with ease (see Chapter 7). Imposing public and civic architecture can emphasise the sheer power of the state as well as its cultural refinement, and the survival of Berlin's imperial architecture, including its museums, in this period can be contrasted with the burning of the books that underpinned the museums' usefulness in educational terms. Today the situation has changed again, and the imperial goal of matching London and Paris has been achieved, since the tourists museums such as the Pergamon, Louvre and British Museum now primarily serve are unlikely to distinguish between the different imperial histories of the cultural institutions of the three; they are equally naturalised as parts of their cities' imperial pasts. Present-day Unter den Linden and Museumsinsel are at least as convincing as the centre of a great nineteenth-century European empire to the casual observer as their English and French counterparts – more so for their careful preservation and restoration – but their roles in such a context were extremely short-lived and never matched Germany's territorial aspirations, and the whole as seen today is the reconstructed centre of an empire that never quite was.

The German experience and its consequences

Germany's interest in Mesopotamia was conceived as a primarily imperial one, and the work of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft can be seen as the cultural aspect of a much broader imperial/colonial ambition. At the end of the nineteenth century the area seemed to hold great commercial promise as part of

an overland route between Europe and India, and the possibility of sending German colonists to Iraq was seriously considered (Hauser 2001: 215). The link between imperial and archaeological ambition was so clear as to allow Budge to write that "as for excavations in Assyria and Babylonia, many shrewd observers have remarked that Germany only began to excavate seriously in those countries when she began to dream of creating the German Oriental Empire" (Budge 1925: 293). It is worthwhile to consider the writing of Koldewey, Delitzsch and others as a form of colonial literature, created within the context of a young state's colonial ambition, if not necessarily acting consciously to legitimate it.

Delitzsch was well aware of the political implications of his work, and far from perceiving a constraint or conflict of interests in this saw instead a legitimate reason and motivation. Though a scholar, he fell easily and confidently into the strong rhetoric and ambition of the statesman. In *Die deutsche Expedition nach Babylon* (Delitzsch 1899) he set out clearly his ambition of linking Germany with Babylon just as England was now linked with Nineveh. Although they turned into a great religious controversy, the 'Babel-Bibel' lectures were intended to celebrate Germany's success in doing just this. As well as fitting with his own belief in the contemporary importance of the work, Delitzsch would have expected to benefit from talking about the political/imperial aspect of German archaeology in Mesopotamia because it lent his work and position importance and authority. Although causing great controversy in practice, Delitzsch's goal in giving the 'Babel-Bibel' lectures had been profoundly

conservative: to stake a claim for Assyriology in Germany's newfound sense of national destiny.

Robert Koldewey, by contrast, writes about the site and the excavations themselves almost exclusively. *The Excavations at Babylon* does not contain any argument for the relevance of Babylon to an expansionist, ambitious Germany. Even the bulk of Koldewey's preface is devoted to the chronology of the excavations and acknowledgments: of the Berlin Museums, the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, the Kaiser, Delitzsch – as a translator – and his most important staff in the field, first among whom is listed Walter Andrae. Koldewey's silence on politics is at least as interesting to us as Delitzsch's forthright imperialism. There are several questions to consider, one of which is particularly intriguing at a biographical level: did Koldewey agree with the purpose of his work as expressed by Delitzsch? Others are more interesting from the point of view of historiography: did Koldewey seek to appear more objective and/or scientific through adopting a consciously self-effacing style in his writing? This seems entirely plausible; Koldewey's writing is certainly far-removed from the travelogues on which his predecessors had tended to base their work. Personal anecdotes are absent, and the focus is on a thorough description of the site, with abundant plans and technical illustrations (Fig. 6.11). Possibly he felt unable or unqualified to write of the political significance of his work. The hierarchy was clear, and Koldewey may have seen his role as being to report to superiors such as Delitzsch, who in turn had the authority to communicate with the wider world. The result, however, was that Koldewey's

work, despite its great academic significance, had comparatively little impact on the popular representation of the Mesopotamian past in Wilhelmine Germany.

The separation in the roles of Koldewey and Delitzsch is significant in terms of future archaeological practice and writing. In eschewing the political aspect of his situation to concentrate on the site, Koldewey begins a trend that gradually becomes the norm in archaeology. In effect, he cedes control to the Berlin establishment. That Delitzsch is a professor only matters in this regard insofar as it places him at the right intersection to speak for that establishment and for the discipline of ancient Near Eastern studies simultaneously. It is Koldewey's work that becomes a model for good archaeological practice and publication, and it is a model that tries very hard to place itself outside the political world. This can be a quite admirable trait in terms of Koldewey's putting research questions above satisfying the imperial ambitions of Berlin. There is, however, an enormous cost incurred. First, ceding control implies ceding responsibility. Koldewey never writes about the broader contemporary implications of his work, and loses his right to a voice in the national debate. This in turn gives us the impression that he can hardly be held responsible for these implications, specifically the bolstering of German claims to power in southern Mesopotamia. Such is not the case, since Koldewey is active in deciding his own future (certainly in pushing for support to dig at Babylon). Second, by eschewing any contemporary political stance Koldewey's style takes on the detached, objective form so heavily criticized in later culture-historical and processual academic work (Wylie 1982; 1989). Koldewey himself and the contemporary world within which he operates are effectively written out of *The Excavations at*

Babylon, a device for academic authority that would ultimately replace the less detailed but more open style of men like Delitzsch (and of English writers on the ancient Near East, including Layard but most prominently – and very late – Budge): that of disinterested scientific objectivity.

Within the events above, and particularly Babel-Bibel, there emerges the beginning of another religious controversy within German Near Eastern studies. Although a famous proponent of a 'pan-Babylonian' argument (the idea that Babylonian culture was the root of all later forms of religion and mythology) Delitzsch was by no means alone, nor was he the most extreme. In later years his denouncement of the Old Testament was set in the most forthright terms with *Die grosse Täuschung* (Delitzsch 1920, 1921), but he went on to argue that Christianity did not need it, and that Jesus was not a Jew; he confined his negation of scripture to that part which was – or was not, particularly, to follow the pan-Babylonian line – Jewish. Again, Delitzsch was not isolated in this view. In particular, his work tied in well with the views of the nationalist anti-Semitic activist and pastor Friedrich Andersen:

> Andersen drew a sharp line between the Christian and Hebrew religions and between the New and Old Testaments. The God of the Israelites, Yahweh of the Old Testament, was a tribal god who taught egoism and materialism. Hence Jews sought to emasculate Christians, attacking their religion with secular philosophies and their sense of racial identity with internationalism. Neither Christ nor the Christian God was Jewish, but rather the source of an otherworldly, idealistic religion and the saviour of all mankind. (Niewyk 1980: 49)

Delitzsch himself died in 1922, but his academic assault on the Old Testament, in combination with the use of his conviction that Mesopotamian culture itself was essentially non-Semitic, as part of the explanation for the great political and cultural achievements of Assyria and Babylonia, appears in retrospect as an early step in the process which by the 1930s saw a growing section of the German scholarly community producing work that served to legitimate the rising anti-Semitism in society at large.

The vanishing moment

By the time of *Die grosse Täuschung* the Babylon excavated by Koldewey was already beginning to disappear. The achievements of the excavation were not matched by conservation. Once exposed, the delicate sun-dried mud-brick architecture could not survive.

> [I]n Budge's sense, the 'buildings were laid bare'; and yet to those who visit the site today the result is somewhat disappointing. Here are no tidy and comprehensible ruins, such as one sees in Greece or Egypt; for it is in the nature of mud-brick walls that their remains, once exposed, are difficult to preserve. As a result, save for the dominating outline of the more massive structures, and some recent reconstructions, the site presents for the modern visitor a scene of devastation almost as complete as when first discovered by European travellers.
>
> (Lloyd 1980: 175-176)

Lloyd emphasises the feeling that destruction and disappearance are somehow fitting here, that in narrative terms they give symmetry to the story and frame it. The event gives the Babylon of the present continuity with that visited by the

early European travellers, and this is not the only way in which the description re-connects with older sources. As he wrote, Lloyd was aware that the "scene of devastation" was a part of Babylon, and that it should be included: after all, this physical disappearance is common to many sites, but rarely is it highlighted in this way. On the other hand, destruction is either explicitly represented or clearly implied in almost every pre-modern source on the city. The return to ruin is more than physical; the city's destruction is part of its moral meaning, aesthetic and narrative value. Cottrell ends his description of the Babylon excavations in much the same way, adding with some bitterness that "since the Germans left the Arab builders of Hillah have quarried away practically every brick of the Ziggurat of Etemenanki" (Cottrell 1959: 47), though earlier he has quoted Lloyd's praise for the skill of local workmen and the establishment of a tradition in tracing and excavating mud-brick across generations at Hillah (Cottrell 1959: 43, after Lloyd 1980: 175). The aesthetic of ruin is a genre of representation in itself, and one within which Babylon plays an uncommon – but not unique – dual role. On the one hand, it can fairly be numbered among the ancient cities that inspire with their dramatic histories:

> The ascendancy over men's minds of the ruins of the stupendous past, the past of history, legend and myth, at once factual and fantastic, stretching back and back into ages that can but be surmised, is half-mystical in basis. The intoxication, at once so heady and so devout, is not the romantic melancholy engendered by broken towers and mouldered stones; it is the soaring of the imagination into high empyrean where huge episodes are tangled with myths and dreams; it is the stunning impact of world history on its amazed heirs. Such ascendancy has been swayed down the ages by the ruins of Troy, of Crete, Mycenae, Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon, Thebes, Rome, Byzantium,

> Carthage, and every temple, theatre and broken column of classical Greece; it is less ruin-worship than the worship of a tremendous past.
>
> (Macaulay 1953: 40)

On the other, this is not the only factor at work in the case of Babylon, whose appeal to travellers, artists and writers also came to be bound up with notions of exoticism and transgression as an outgrowth from the notion of the city's divine punishment. The appeal of Babylon's past has strong parallels with the past grandeur of Venice, whose identity in later representation comes to be dominated, as Tanner argues, by desire, not only for the city's glamorous past but within it, in its narratives (Tanner 1992). As in other aspects of his work, Koldewey is a notable exception to the narrative rule. The very title of his German publication, *Wiedererstehendes Babylon* (*Babylon Rises Again*; Koldewey 1913) emphasises his disinterest in a melancholy discussion of its fall, something he would also surely have considered to be outside the remit of his work. His avoidance of the established narrative forms and rhetorical flourishes for Babylon in general is as much a part of his move away from the mythic and toward the empiricist and even positivistic as his methodical thoroughness itself.

Conclusion

We have looked at three roughly contemporary strategies for representing ancient Mesopotamia in Germany: the methodical, reticent, often dry writing of Robert Koldewey; the hyperbole, controversy and near-disaster of Friedrich Delitzsch and Babel-Bibel; and the conscious return to older models in

Sardanapal. Koldewey's book is a success in terms of its influence on archaeological writing, but not in terms of public communication. To quote Lloyd once more:

> If any reservation is to be made in praising the Germans [at Babylon and Ashur], it is in connection with the public presentation of their results. Total preoccupation with scientific minutiae robbed their writings of all but academic appeal, and the educative potential of their work suffered accordingly.
>
> (Lloyd 1980: 178)

The style Lloyd criticises here is clearly archaeological, as opposed to historical. Koldewey's "scientific minutiae" and their dry presentation are the fruit of a process begun in the nineteenth century, when archaeology, or at least questions of evolution and origins, began to move away from the humanities and toward the natural sciences in approach and style (Morgan 2004: 89). The style has a purpose and makes a programmatic statement of its own: it emphasizes the author's respect for and aspiration to emulate the modern successes of the natural sciences, and implies that such emulation is possible within and appropriate to his subject. This different style not only aims to differentiate itself from that of historical writing, but is aimed at removing itself from its own historical context. "The positivity of a discourse – like Natural History, political economy, or clinical medicine – characterizes its unity throughout time, and well beyond individual *œuvres*, books and texts" (Foucault 1972: 126). This is not to suggest that such a move was purely stylistic: archaeology's development did indeed rely on and bring it closer in content to

sciences, particularly the natural science of geology and the human science of anthropology (Schnapp 2000: 166-167).

Of Koldewey's writing on Babylon what is remembered is – ironically enough – that which relates to older, more poetic accounts, specifically the unearthing of the city wall described by Herodotus and Koldewey's suggestion of a location for the Hanging Gardens. This is one good illustration of the extent to which the concerns of classical historians continue to influence patterns of research into modernity. Indeed, the relevance of their interests to our own is demonstrated by the continuing contemporary debate on the location of the Hanging Gardens (Dalley 1994, 2003b; Foster 2003, 2004; Reade 2000). Of Delitzsch's arguments it was the idea of a Christianity that owed nothing to Judaism that eventually proved popular and influential, as part of an ideology that had nothing to do with Babylon (Larsen 1995: 105).

The popular success in terms of representing Babylon in Germany is *Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime*. It was the least accurate and least progressive of the three approaches, but this was no barrier. Quite the reverse: conservatism and a readiness to subserviate archaeological detail to the story of Sardanapalus lay at the heart of its positive public reception. *Sardanapal* met expectations by using an established narrative. It did this, however, while simultaneously claiming to be the most advanced and accurate reconstruction of ancient Mesopotamia possible. It would be ridiculous to argue with Delitzsch on the accuracy of the cuneiform inscriptions he specified – if Assyriologists today could criticize them they could do so only because their discipline has

built on Delitzsch's work, and in particular his classic *Assyrische Grammatik/Assyrian Grammar*, published simultaneously in German and English (Delitzsch 1889a, 1889b) and forming a cornerstone of Assyriology for the next century. Nor does it particularly matter that large parts of the Assyria on stage were based on Babylonian models – that such a distinction could even be made is largely thanks to the German excavations. What matters is that the wealth of detail, the selective but nonetheless painstaking accuracy, was packaged with care in such a way as to say absolutely nothing new about ancient Mesopotamia. The role of archaeology in this exercise was not to update the image of Mesopotamia at all, but to validate existing preconceptions:

> [T]his choice of opera marks a sort of epistemological retreat: a folding of difference into sameness, acknowledging more publicity is to be gained by confirming rather than amending expectation.
>
> (Bohrer 2003: 299)

This success, of course, is no success at all. It is hollow both as academic communication and as an artistic achievement. Insofar as neither can make great use of this weak and even duplicit form of conservatism, the two are closely related:

> [T]he real risks of any artist are taken in the work, in pushing the work to the limits of what is possible, in the attempt to increase the sum of what it is possible to think.
>
> Books become good when they go to this edge and risk falling over it – when they endanger the artist by reason of what he has, or has not, *artistically* dared.
>
> (Rushdie 1991: 14)

Sardanapal worked for its audience because at its core it was extremely conservative. It met preconceptions of narrative, atmosphere, and moral message. These factors mattered more than the technical detail that in this case acted as their smokescreen, and as we have seen they demonstrated enormous continuity while still responding to contemporary cultural changes such as the fin-de-siècle. As a historical project, one of the questions this thesis is well positioned to address is whether this continuity extends beyond the excavation and archaeological 'recovery' of Babylon. If so, why and how? And if not, what part did archaeology play in the change? Thus far the answers have tended to show continuity. From the outbreak of the First World War onwards, however, the ground shifts and often falls away. Europe witnesses changes that fundamentally affect the place of archaeology and history: a great rise in atheism and a diminishing role for the humanities; the latter reduced, according to some, to mere luxuries that the dangerous new world could do very well without:

> [T]he barbarism of the twentieth century, prefaced by fin-de-siècle decadence, muted the excesses of romantic optimism. The notion of progress slipped to the status of a slogan. This feeling was adumbrated by Tolstoy who, in a letter to Nazariev, wrote that 'history is nothing but a collection of fables and trifles, cluttered up with a mass of unnecessary figures and proper names.' [Cited in Berlin 1981: 31] It seems that the visions of prophets and the speculations of philosophers were being lost in the quagmire of mass culture with its Auschwitzes, gulags, and prevailing cacophony.
>
> (Herrera 2001: 11-12)

These blows, not only to the notion of progress that placed white European males at its pinnacle, but also to the more benign hope of progress in the world as a general belief in human ability to build toward positive goals in the long term, were accompanied by the decline of Europe's shared elite cultural canon, due to (a) the emergence of increasingly cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious societies, (b) the demise of the Bible as a source of narratives familiar to and accepted by all, and (c) emerging new approaches to education throughout Europe. The next chapter addresses the fate of themes in Babylon's representation in this period of profound cultural and intellectual change.

Chapter 7: Knowledge in the Library of Babel

> The steady and arduous progress of science, which will ultimately celebrate its greatest triumph in an *ontogeny of thought*, will deal decisively with all these views. Its conclusion might perhaps end up with this tenet: That which we now call the world is the result of a number of errors and fantasies, which came about gradually in the overall development of organic beings, fusing with one another, and now handed down to us as a collected treasure of our entire past – a treasure: for the *value* of our humanity rests upon it. From this world of idea strict science can, in fact, release us only to a small extent (something we by no means desire), in that it is unable to break significantly the power of ancient habits of feeling. But it can illuminate, quite gradually, step by step, the history of the origin of that world as idea – and lift us, for moments at least, above the whole process. Perhaps we will recognize then that the thing-in-itself deserves a Homeric laugh, in that it *seemed* to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is, empty of meaning.
>
> (Nietzsche 1984 (1878): 1. 16: 24)

The German excavations came to a halt with the outbreak of the First World War. By 1918 the world was already transformed, and the period of greatest upheaval, uncertainty, creation, destruction and above all things change in human history – Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* (Hobsbawm 1995 (1994)) – had truly begun. This was the century in which Nietzsche's most awful aspiration, the massacre of the 'bungled and botched' for the sake of 'great men,' was brutally realised, and in which nothing more rigorous than "an appeal to the

emotions" (Russell 2004: 697) could be summoned to combat the contempt for humanity at his philosophy's core.

In common with most other academic disciplines archaeology has since become embroiled in a far-reaching debate about its role in a radically changed and changing world. The complexity of human identities in the past and present has become an overwhelmingly important theme, driving the development of interpretative theory, while unsettling debates over the nature of reality and the epistemological basis for archaeology as an authoritative source of knowledge on the past, while rooted in nineteenth-century philosophical and scientific developments, are inconceivable in the archaeology of the early twentieth century. At a more prosaic level the same can said of an increased complexity regarding archaeological approaches to socio-economics: the foundations of a new breadth and flexibility can be found, in very different ways, in the economic and political theory of Marx and in the anthropological theory of Malinowski, but their impact on archaeological thought is delayed until practitioners' own experience of the contemporary world brought these elements to the fore. In all three cases – identity, epistemology, socio-economy – complexity, potential variety, instability and importance were demonstrated on the grandest and most dangerous scale in the present, and their increased role in the study of the past is directly linked to this development.

In part, the increasing theoretical and methodological complexity to be found in more recent attempts to deal with these subjects is attributable to the relative youth of archaeology as a discipline, and the emergence of more nuanced

approaches to these issues has been seen as indicative of a discipline reaching its academic maturity. This explanation is only partial, however, as once again problems emerge in attempting to explain fundamental change in terms of cumulative growth.

This chapter focuses on approaches to Babylon within and without archaeology after World War I, analysing their relationships to the history charted in Chapters 3-5, the archaeological 'moment' of Chapter 6, and the new, historically particular forces of cultural history in the twentieth century. In bringing the historical content of this thesis into the context of present-day political uses of the past, the depth and importance of relationships between the two will be demonstrated. The chapter is divided into three broad threads: the development of German archaeological theory after the First World War; and Babylon's role in twentieth-century representation outside the archaeological; and the role of the Mesopotamian past in Iraq's history as an independent state.

German archaeological discourse to 1933

Nowhere was the tumult of twentieth-century European political, social and cultural life so acutely felt as within its young but powerful new focus: unified Germany. The economic performance of Germany in its first few decades of existence, including and backed by phenomenal industrial and military development, left Britain and France, for all their global reach, relatively weak in Europe itself. By the eve of the First World War Germany could boast school and university systems that were the envy of the world and a huge industrial output, as well as what had become "the most powerful military state in the

world" (Roberts 1989 (1967): 223). Even Britain's seemingly unassailable naval dominance became a gap that Admiral Tirpitz aimed to close at speed (Hobsbawm 1987: 319). The language of German politics had grown correspondingly ambitious: "*Weltpolitik* meant for Germans in the 1890s the invention of a new world mission for Germany worthy of her industrial, technological, cultural and military strength" (Joll 1990 (1973): 91). Small wonder, then, that the fight for the nation's identity and destiny was intense. Between the late-nineteenth century foundation of proto-imperial organisations such as the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and the rise to power of the Nazi party archaeology in Germany – and Europe as a whole – was the focus of intense political and ideological battles whose implications continue to affect us in the present. It was also a period of great technical and scientific innovation in the subject, again centred on Germany (Arnold and Hassmann 1995: 71). This potent combination, we can now see, was ripe for exploitation by political extremists.

Returning to Delitzsch and Babel-Bibel, we are already witness to perhaps the first major derailment of imperialist archaeological discourse by religious and racial concerns. That it is a derailment is itself one of the most important points to note about the situation. Nineteenth- (and arguably twentieth-) century imperialist archaeologies in which racial hierarchies of various kinds were implicit, assumed or consciously developed as explanatory models and the specifically twentieth-century archaeologies that were explicitly driven by racial and ethnic theories have many parallels and connections, but they are absolutely not continuous nor even particularly compatible. Babel-Bibel provides a good

case in point. The lectures were conceived as a staged, controlled public spectacle, and as such had a clear intended narrative. This was simply to highlight to the nation and the world at large the great steps that studies of the ancient Near East had taken in Germany over a short period of time, and to emphasise that Germany was now the equal of Britain and France in the archaeology and ancient languages of the region. They were not intended as the spur to a national outcry or the condemnation of philological research as blasphemous. The clue that this is what Delitzsch's lectures would induce, however, was to be found very close to home, within the German academy itself. The recent rise of grand theory on race, language and human development, of which pan-Babylonianism formed a part, appears in retrospect as a bellwether. As has been mentioned above, the foci of academic research on the past are often linked to the pressing concerns of the present, and the public reaction to the first two *Babel und Bibel* lectures more than matched academic interest in the issues they discussed. Later, those who, like Delitzsch, drew explicitly anti-Semitic conclusions from their study of ancient texts were nonetheless part of a broader cultural movement that had more to do with old stereotypes and new insecurities than with the implications of recent philological research.

In other areas of history, archaeology and ethnography theories of race were coming to the fore. The name most strongly associated with the changing emphasis of archaeological discourse is that of Gustav Kossinna. Kossinna was hardly alone in promulgating confusion between linguistic, racial and ethnic identities in his work, but his conclusions drew on multiple strands of

nationalist desire. Not only could his theories legitimate for the German people a sense of superiority, they could also incorporate ancient Greece (Anthony 1995: 91). This inclusion was enormously important because in Germany – perhaps more even than in Britain, where imperial experiences had promoted a yet greater interest in the Roman Empire – ancient Greece had a decidedly special place in history. Winckelmann had first constructed the typology that formally put Greek art at the pinnacle of human aesthetic achievement in the eighteenth century. European Enlightenment thought was both ideologically open to and tangibly affected by his view of the greatest aesthetic achievement being reached through the greatest personal freedom (Podro 1982: 8), though Winckelmann himself did not follow the model consistently, frequently showing great admiration for works produced under autocratic regimes (Haskell 1993: 219-220). Many of the most important writers influenced by Winckelmann were German speakers and wrote in German, further heightening his impact upon the high culture of the Germanic kingdoms including, crucially from the point of view of later history, Prussia. Schnapp highlights Winckelmann's particular resonance in the original German:

> Mid-eighteenth century Germany, which worshipped daily at the shrine of Greek art, was to find in Winckelmann an inspired singer of the praises of antique art, who expressed in a new kind of German prose the matchless quality of Greek art... Winckelmann transcended archaeology in the relevance of his analyses, but above all in the quality of his style and the ambition of his aesthetic.
>
> (Schnapp 1996: 258)

Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Winckelmann 1934 (1764)) became canonical, and this status was only entrenched by the increasing volume of northern European travellers to Greece, and by the shipment of greater quantities of antiquities from Greece and Italy in the nineteenth century. The overwhelming dominance of the classics in Prussian intellectual life was only beginning to shift at the turn of the twentieth century (Hauser 2001: 217), a process helped, ironically, by the great achievements of German scholars in classical philology and archaeology in the nineteenth century:

> German scholars had begun the process of de-throning the Classical. They could not avoid studying the material of the Mycenaean, Geometric and Archaic date that their excavations relentlessly revealed. Such objects simply could not be fitted into Winckelmann's idea of Classical Art. They had to be studied for different reasons and with different methods.
>
> (Whitley 2000: 37)

Kossinna's approach, building up an ethno-linguistic model that placed Germanic Aryans at its peak, might have been expected to be incompatible with an idolisation of ancient Greek art and architecture. His model could only explain great cultural achievements through the migration of *Kulturvolker*, a term coined by Gustav Klemm to designate culturally creative peoples as opposed to passive *Naturvolker* (Klemm 1843-1852, cited in Trigger 1989: 165). For Kossinna, *Kulturvolker* meant Germanic peoples, and so for him the Greeks and Romans became groups of Germanic colonists whose genius had been gradually corrupted by inferior local blood. Such an explanation emphasised the idea of Germany's special position and destiny in

Kulturgeschichte whilst avoiding a total renunciation of ancient Greek culture and its merits. The model was a racial adaptation of Winckelmann's doctrine of the downfall of art through superfluity. The artist, in Winckelmann's opinion,

> [A]t last gradually raised art among the Greeks to the highest beauty. After all the parts constituting grandeur and beauty were united, the artist, in seeking to embellish them, fell into the error of profuseness; art consequently lost its grandeur; and the loss was finally followed by its utter downfall.
>
> (Winckelmann 2001 (1880): 134)

In due course, new waves of Germanic peoples overwhelmed Rome. Here, Kossinna looked further back, to Tacitus. As Thomas Burns argues, "The most salient fact about the Gothic migrations is that they forcefully underscore how old theories never die" (Burns 1982: 1). The journal set up by Kossinna to disseminate the findings of the Deutscher Gesellschaft für Vorgeschichte, of which he was the first president, was called *Mannus* after a founding god of the Germanic peoples named in *Germania* II. 3. Tacitus himself regarded the Germanic peoples "as aboriginal, and not mixed at all with other races through immigration or intercourse", albeit for rather different reasons than Kossinna. For him, "[Q]uite apart from the danger of a rough and unknown sea, who would abandon Asia or Africa or Italy for Germania, with its unlovely landscape and harsh climate, dreary to inhabit or behold, if it were not one's native land?" (*Germania* II. 1-2; Rives 1999). For Kossinna, the important aspect was purity of German blood. Nietzsche's aristocratic supermen, already innately superior and devoid of any responsibility to the rest of humanity, and already driven by the megalomaniac *raison d'être* of the will to power, could

now take on a racial character. (It should be noted that this was a development in absolute contradiction of Nietzsche's own racial theories, in which racial mixtures were held to produce better human types and the notion of racial 'purity' was dismissed as a chimera (Lloyd-Jones 1982: 166))

There is little common ground between the ideas of Delitzsch and Kossinna. Ex oriente lux could not sit easily with a model that made Germany the font of all cultural innovation. For his part Kossinna dismissed Near Eastern, Egyptian, and even classical studies as unpatriotic in the conclusion to his *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte: eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft* ('German prehistory: A supremely national science') (Kossinna 1912). Nonetheless, Delitzsch's controversy is one that, as much as Kossinna's work, is relevant to the later use of archaeology in legitimating anti-Semitic persecution. Moreover, they shared a position in the changes then sweeping through the German academy. Suzanne Marchand characterizes Kossinna and the arch pan-babylonianist Hugo Winckler as examples of a contemporary 'type':

> [A]spirants to cultural prestige... [who] would look to the universities for cultural legitimation... most leading para-academic existences... Importantly, these academic outcasts generally spoke to rather large popular audiences composed of educated laypeople and local elites, evinced sympathy for the natural sciences, and, usually working in areas less attractive to the classicising professorate (such as indology, German prehistory and Near Eastern studies), drew popular attention to the insularity and obsolescence of neohumanist academe.
>
> (Marchand 1994: 111)

Although he can hardly be seen as a rank outsider or 'para-academic', some of the characteristics identified by Marchand extend even to the august Delitzsch. Certainly his speeches to a broad public brought a new relevance and urgency to the work of his discipline. As in the case of Kossinna however, his controversial interventions foreshadowed the Nazi use of his subject. For Delitzsch and others it was not the Bible as a whole that was undermined but specifically the Old Testament. *Die Grosse Täuschung* (Delitzsch 1920; 1921) advocated a German Christianity based entirely on the New Testament. For Delitzsch, the existence of Mesopotamian comparators negated the status of the Old Testament as revealed knowledge, but was not relevant to the life of Jesus Christ and could not undermine the New Testament. In the 1930s this fringe position was to move to the very centre of German religious politics, with terrible consequences. Although he did not live to see this or the Holocaust, Delitzsch would have been well aware that his work was politically meaningful. Political anti-Semitism, never absent in European history, had been a significant factor in German politics since the late 1870s, associated with extreme nationalism and at least tolerated by Bismarck for the purposes of 'negative integration,' whereby the perception of some internal enemies helped to unify and stabilise relations between other groups (Volkov 1978: 313-319). Anti-Semitic movements were fuelled by the uncertainties and removal of traditional structures associated with industrialisation and urbanisation (Steinman 1998: 143). They also became linked with nationalism, another factor relevant to the work of Delitzsch. The link was a strong one: according to Pulzer, "Nationalism had, by the beginning of the twentieth century, become the main driving force behind anti-Semitism" (Pulzer 1998 (1964): 221)

Babylon outside archaeology

D.W. Griffith and *Intolerance*

Babylon's most noteworthy appearance in cinema comes in D. W. Griffith's epic motion picture *Intolerance: Love's Struggle Through the Ages*[269] (1916). Griffith's Babylon returned to Edwin Long and to Herodotus for inspiration, yet in some respects *Intolerance* is also an emphatic indicator of change in Babylon's meaning in representation from the nineteenth-century sources that provide its visual inspiration.

We should begin by noting the ambition of Griffith in *Intolerance*. The film was exceptional in a number of ways, and any analysis must take account of the fact that this was, very consciously, a work of innovations and superlatives, explicitly intended to break new ground and expand the horizons of the young motion-picture industry. The film was technically and thematically ambitious in equal measure, and expensive beyond all probability for such an original venture. *Intolerance* was the first multi-reel motion picture, and its three hours of footage dwarfed anything previously seen. Its high production values were equally novel, particularly in the American film industry, which at this time was less lavish in most respects than those of Italy and France. Griffith, who had already produced hundreds of less innovative silent pictures ("some 485 one- and two-reelers made for the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company at the rate of two and three per week" (Merritt 1981: 17)), had enjoyed great success with *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), and intended to surpass his

achievements here in *Intolerance*. *The Birth of a Nation* has since tarnished Griffith's reputation for posterity due to its pronounced racism and positive portrayal of the Ku Klux Clan (Kirby 1978: 121; Gallagher 1982: 69). Even at the time some attempts were made to ban the film, and limited censorship was imposed by the National Board of Review, although this censorship seems to have been only of white racism and racist violence, not the negative representations of blacks (Rogin 1985: 174). Nonetheless, it was received as the biggest commercial and artistic success of the American cinema, in which Griffith demonstrated a new mastery of cinematography, leading commentators to claim erroneously that he had actually invented techniques such as the close-up and fade-out (Matthews 2001). *Intolerance*, as a relatively difficult academic piece produced on an enormous scale, did not enjoy the same commercial success, and financially ruined Griffith. Today, however, it is hard to see as a failure. Griffith's bankruptcy seems positively heroic, coming about through a cast of thousands and creating the most lavish and spectacular art. The scale, aesthetic merit and intellectual ambition of *Intolerance* mark it out as an important moment in the history of cinema.

The film's theme is an eternal conflict between love and intolerance, as expressed through four historical studies: ancient Babylon; Judea at the time of Christ; the persecution of the Huguenots in sixteenth-century Paris and the industrial development of early 1900s America. Of these, the first and last receive most attention, and the film is best remembered for the Babylon sets (Figs. 7.1, 7.2), probably still the largest and in historical cost terms most expensive in the history of cinema. The Babylonian storyline was inspired by

Edwin Long's *Babylonian Marriage Market* of 1875 (Chapter 5). Once again a Greek source, Herodotus, is used in preference to newly available Mesopotamian themes, and this at a time when the American academy was rapidly achieving parity with European institutions in the study of ancient Mesopotamia (Kucklick 1996). Not to say that these studies were discarded. Rather, as with Long's painting, they were employed selectively, making all the effort in authenticity of detail only. As with Long this elicited scholarly approval: A. H. Sayce praised Griffith's attention to detail enthusiastically in an unpublished letter, and his praise is repeated in the souvenir program of *Intolerance* (both held in the Griffith Archive, Museum of Modern Art, New York, and cited in Hanson 1972: 498). Where Griffith's work differs from Long's is that in *Intolerance* Herodotus (via Long) only sets the initial conditions; the story is Griffith's and is modern. An uncouth mountain girl, representing one of the less attractive women in Long's painting, attempts to escape from the vicissitudes of the marriage market and decide her own fate. Her will in the story represents love, her oppression intolerance. Even if Herodotus was not sincere in his praise of the marriage market as a system (cf. Chapter 3), nor is the independent and non-conforming mountain girl of *Intolerance* the better alternative he meant to imply. For Long in 1875 the same character, pictured at the end of the line of maidens at the bottom right of the image, is little short of an ogre. Her unrefined posture and coarse expressions, which in Griffith's work represent a vital and positive will to freedom, in Long's image are monstrous and frightening, as evidenced by the horrified male figure pictured above this girl, his own youth and effeminate fineness of feature intended to contrast with her masculinised image. Just as with the Tower of

Babel, meaning here has changed radically within, ostensibly, the same story. And just as with the Tower of Babel that change has been in the direction of a concern with identity and the loss or, as in this case, conscious rejection of old certainties. This form of change has been analysed in the context of archaeological communication by Rosemary Joyce. Joyce presents Bakhtin's notion of the time and place of any writing or speech rendering it unique, whether the words themselves have been expressed before and in the same order or not – what he referred to as the 'total context' – as one with great relevance for archaeological writing (Joyce 2002: 29-34). In this non-archaeological example we can see how the same textual source on the past takes on a radically different meaning in the present dependent upon political and social circumstance. In quoting archaeologists and antiquarians of earlier generations in this thesis I am continually doing much the same, and for this reason it is worth considering briefly some of the methodological problems associated with this.

Opinions, assumptions and expectations take on a different meaning simply by being treated as historical rather than contemporary documents, and certainly by being reproduced outside their own contemporary context. The most commonly encountered example of this phenomenon is probably the tendency for gendered terminology and a more didactic style, both norms of their time, to make writers of the 1960s and earlier seem boorish to a present-day reader, but the effect is much more pervasive. Reading older quotation as historical is an experience more akin to watching the dialogue between an author and their contemporary readership than to participating in it directly; the reader's own dialogue remains

largely with the writer who is using the quotation, since it is they who define the context of the material and the light in which it should be considered by the reader. Few authors can overcome the distance of changing perspectives and write effectively to posterity, as participant rather than subject. To achieve this within a quotation or a later discussion of the author's work such sympathetic abilities must lie with both writers, since one must choose to facilitate the intelligent communication of the other, and must be able to mediate between the perspectives of that writer and the contemporary reader. Here the apparent cumulative stability of historical research again falters, and the need for constant and active renewal and reassessment becomes clear. This is not, it should be stressed, to devalue the expert interpretation of historical sources in the present as opposed to the belief that they can speak for themselves adequately without. Nor is it to suggest that such sympathy, in the sense of emphasizing the contemporary relevance of a particular statement, is not fraught with the same problems for the historical writer as placing emphasis on that which is outmoded and alien in a writer's work. What is important for our purposes is simply to recognise that this relation of dependence exists.

Modernity and Babel

Griffith's use of an Orientalist history painting as his starting point is, if not anachronistic, certainly late. In contrast with the sexually charged exoticism of the fin-de-siècle (see Chapter 5), perhaps the most prominent feature of Babylon's treatment in twentieth-century non-archaeological discourse has been its popularity as a motif in philosophical work on identity, knowledge and the complexity of the world at large. In the twentieth century a very old theme – the

nature of the Confusion of Tongues – returns to the fore. Stripped of the certainty of divine will at its centre, however, the Babel of Genesis becomes a very different subject, and one whose relevance to the emergent and in some ways genuinely new patterns of living in the global twentieth century will be demonstrated to have substance and depth as well as the emotive strength of a well-chosen cipher. This is never more true than in the case of Jorge Luis Borges, whose work epitomises some distinctively twentieth-century uses of Babylon.

In his playful interest in the absurd Borges is the direct descendant of Lewis Carroll. The two writers also share a tendency to employ mathematical elements in their works. Infinity is a recurring theme in Borges' writing, as is the labyrinth (not, as in common usage, a maze, but in the stricter sense of a single, folding path leading to a central place). Borges saw the labyrinth as symbolic of – perhaps actually constituting – a form of thought or meditation (a perspective shared with Dante (Doob 1990: 66), whose journey in the *Divine Comedy* is a good example of a true labyrinth). His two stories with supposedly Babylonian settings are both found within a series the author called *The Garden of Forking Paths*, and both concern infinity and the labyrinth. Against first impressions, both also concern Babylon.

The Library of Babel (Borges 2000 (1964): 78-86) is named for the Confusion of Tongues. It consists of the description of a library consisting of hexagonal chambers, in which every possible combination of twenty-five printed characters over 410 pages is given. The text's narrator maintains that the library

is infinite in time and endlessly cyclical in space, on account of his awareness of a finite number of combinations but inability to conceive of a finite universe. Borges uses this structure to play with the subjects of authorship, language and knowledge. In particular, he draws out the self-referential nature of all written knowledge in the library, since it contains,

> Everything: the minutely detailed history of the future, the archangels' autobiographies, the faithful catalogue of the Library, thousands and thousands of false catalogues, the demonstration of the fallacy of those catalogues, the demonstration of the fallacy of the true catalogue, the Gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary on that gospel, the commentary on the commentary on that gospel, the true story of your death, the translation of every book in all languages, the interpolations of every book in all books.
>
> (Borges 2000: 81-82)

The problem of drawing meaning from such a library, of transferring knowledge out of this self-referential system, is analogous to Derrida's (Derrida 1981) web of infinite signification: the assertion that Saussure's signifiers corresponded not, as the latter's original model had argued, to signifieds, i.e. things and concepts in the world, but to more signifiers, that these in turn did the same, and that it is therefore (a) impossible to give a perfect description of an object, and (b) impossible for a sign to be discrete; instead any one must refer, ultimately, to the whole of language. Derrida's (for some) systematic undermining of the human capacity for making meaning sparked strong reactions, and it is a similar problem that Borges presents to the reader. Although the very first sentence of the story begins "The universe (which others

call the library)..." it becomes apparent only gradually that the point being made extends beyond the problems of infinite signification within texts. In *The Library of Babel* the question of infinity and significance is ultimately made physical and tactile. The impotence of the librarians, trapped within their self-referential library, becomes the reader's own. The sense is that of being entirely lost, reaching hopelessly for meaning that one knows, from a structural point of view, cannot exist.

The problems raised by *The Library of Babel* are wholly modern, yet the endeavours of the librarians reflect an older approach to knowledge and language; the belief in something divine underlying the chaos. The reconstruction of the original Adamite language was, in earlier discourse, a subject of much speculation and scholarly inquiry, of which Kircher's comparative linguistic studies in the third volume of *Turris Babel* (Chapter 5) may be the apotheosis. More interestingly, the study of the origins and development of languages remained the preserve of philologists closely allied to archaeology. The land of Babel, coincidentally, remained the best place to study the earliest written language and to witness linguistic change over time. The gulf between a philological work and a philosophical meditation on the properties of written language is vast, yet both are ways of knowing the same subject matter. The question of how one might begin to integrate the two brings up many interesting possibilities. The point here, however, is that the biblical Confusion of Tongues did not cease to be a relevant and intriguing subject in terms of the human condition, but that archaeology, once formed into its twentieth-century shape and removed from a literal understanding of the

Genesis account, was no longer equipped for such meditations, an infinitely more natural heir to this role being found in students of language much further from archaeology: Borges, or more recently Umberto Eco (Eco 1995).

It thus becomes apparent that the location of some parts of Babylon's identity and mythology outside archaeology does not mean that those aspects cease to function in important ways, even within academia, once archaeology's purposes and position are relatively established. Another Eco work, *Serendipities* (Eco 1998) treats a theme relevant to the case of *The Library of Babel* and others in this chapter: the serendipitous creation of useful knowledge from mistakes; of truth from error. Among the examples Eco selects are scholarship building on the Ptolemaic universe and Columbus's discovery of the Americas, but there are many other cases. The scale and diversity of such serendipity that can be demonstrated around Babylon, for example, threatens to dwarf that which is intentional, and Borges's library/universe is one among many surprising outcomes. Returning to origins, the Tower of Babel in Genesis inspired much scholarship. On the one hand searches for the original language, while acting on the basis of a narrative many Christians in the twentieth century would not treat as literal, produced much valuable and useful knowledge on the relationships between languages, and thus some of the foundations of present-day comparative linguistics. On the other searches for the physical site of the Tower, not to mention the Hanging Gardens, walls, incalculable wealth and evidence of its decimation by God, lead to the discovery and decipherment of Mesopotamia's cuneiform archive; the most completely preserved of ancient literatures and, as it happened, the best-positioned for establishing that the

Hebrew of the Old Testament formed part of a complex and geographically wide-ranging linguistic history, and was not the divine or Adamite language various Christian and Jewish scholars, including St Augustine, had at times argued (Eco 1998: 27). As we saw in Chapter 6 the biblical fame of Babylon was an important factor in the Deutsche-Orient Gesellschaft's decision to finance excavations there, and thus, in large part, to generate an 'archaeological' identity for the city. The idea that this archaeological identity might compete with or harm the legitimacy of others was not part of the imperial agenda. Meanwhile, the study of languages, developed (like archaeology) in the belief that it might take humanity closer to a divine Truth, would lead eventually to the grandest destabilising of textual knowledge: to Derrida, Barthes and later Baudrillard; and of course to *The Library of Babel.* All of these developments can be described, in whole or in part, as serendipitous.

In *The Lottery in Babylon* (Borges 2000: 55-61), Borges may have been inspired in part by classical material, either in the marriage market of Herodotus or the story of Semiramis tricking Ninus from his throne in Plutarch (Chapter 3). The story is original, however, and its concerns modern. In it a state lottery extends beyond money to consume all aspects of life as the lottery's architects attempt to turn it into a just and complete redistributive system. The result is dystopian, and Borges uses it to explore the modern condition of existence in a world whose systems and scale of operations are inhuman (the Company running the lottery seems omnipotent to Borges' narrator) and, from the perspective of the individual within them, mystifying, yet which at the level of

the state have a curious logic of their own. This is also a characteristic of *The Library of Babel* – from the perspective of its mysterious creator – and of the labyrinth, whose aesthetic is "based on the fact that, fully perceived and appreciated, the maze transcends apparent disorder to reveal a grand design" (Doob 1990: 66). Biblical Babel, built too large and with ambitions too great for humanity's own good, is a perfect setting for such an exploration.

The Babel and Babylon imagined by Borges have many visual equivalents, including some images based explicitly on his work (7.4). There are many twentieth-century representations of the Tower of Babel, and their emphasis is most often on a world that has grown too large and complex for human habitation. Often they reflect the inhuman scale of twentieth century skyscrapers, as is the case in M.C. Escher's bleak *Tower of Babel*[272] (Fig. 7.3), the new Tower of Babel in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*[271] (1927; Fig. 7.4) or the more recent sculptures of Anne Desmet[285, 288, 289] (Fig. 7.5). To return to *Walking in the City* (De Certeau 1999; see Chapter 2), the distinction Michel de Certeau makes between those who inhabit and those who watch from above is one that is greatly intensified in everyday life with the establishment of new kinds of urban architecture.

Babylon and exile: Zionism and Rastafari

The question of 'total context' also affects the story of the Babylonian Captivity. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw unprecedented levels of deportation, exile, enslavement, displacement and alienation of all kinds. For some groups the struggles of the ancient Israelites in the Babylon of

Nebuchadnezzar provided compelling parallels with their own situations, and the desire for a return to Zion became a very modern rallying point for the dispossessed. Most obviously there is modern Zionism itself. Demands for the creation of the modern state of Israel were always couched in an acute historical awareness of a long history of persecution and oppression, starting with the trials of the Old Testament, both in Exodus and in the Captivity, and it is in this broadest sense that the term Zionism is used here.

The use of Babylon and Zion in Zionism involves both historical and allegorical references to both cities. Even the return to Jerusalem itself has been, for some, much more than a literal territorial goal:

> The important distinction [in evaluating the past results and contemporary relevance of Zionism] in this regard is between Herzl's school of 'political Zionism' and Ahad Ha'am's school of 'spiritual Zionism.' ...According to Ahad Ha'am, Zionism's primary aim was to overcome the threat to the survival of the Jews as a nation due to historical processes such as emancipation and secularisation, which drove many Jews to assimilate. Ahad Ha'am sought to cope with the threat by establishing a 'spiritual centre' in the Land of Israel, one destined to foster a Jewish national culture that would unify the Jewish people and preserve their historical continuity.
>
> (Don-Yehiya 1998: 267)

Babylon survives as a rhetorical device in Zionism, although the most influential developments in the binary pairing of the cities have been those of Christian sources, specifically Revelation (see Chapter 3) and St Augustine (see Chapter 5). The actual modern displacement of the Iraqi (Babylonian) Jews reverses the biblical situation: in the twentieth century virtually the entire

Jewish population of Iraq has been forced out of the country. Rakowitz lists factors including "Arab nationalism, Germanophilia, British colonialism" (Rakowitz 1997: 177) – all of which led to anti-Semitism in Iraq during the 1930s, and the *farhud* riots of 1941 (Rejwan 1985: 217-224) – but most importantly the creation of the state of Israel. After 1948 the situation for Jews in Iraq rapidly became untenable, and in 1950-51 all but a few thousand of Iraq's c.125,000 Jews emigrated, principally by means of airlifts to Israel. Iraq's Jewish population could trace its origins in the country back two and a half thousand years to the Babylonian deportations, and their loss both of home and of a stake in Iraq's national identity can hardly be seen as liberation.

Another – and comparable – politicised use of Babylon is made in Rastafarian tradition. Zionist and Rastafarian uses of Babylon share a great deal because the symbolism of Babylon is relevant to those aspects of the two that are most alike in political and religious terms. First, both are explicitly political movements with explicitly religious foundations. Second, both are very seriously concerned with place, exile and homeland. Finally, both are affected by the fear of loss of identity through 'assimilation' into white and Gentile power structures and societies respectively (on perceived threats of assimilation in Zionism, Taylor 1972: 50; in Rastafari, Simpson 1985: 287). Rastafarian usage of Babylon is also interesting in its differences from that of Zionism, however, and particularly its explicit relocation of both Babylon and Zion. The use of parallels with the Babylonian Captivity in this case serves to underline the emotive power of biblical metaphors. After all, the metaphor of the Babylonian Captivity is less horrific and far smaller in scale than the effects of the Atlantic

slave trade it has come to symbolise, yet that symbolism has remained of paramount importance.

Emperor Haile Selassie I's construction of a messianic self-image in Ethiopia/Abyssinia was taken up with great enthusiasm in Jamaica, where an existing politicised afrocentrism influenced by the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Marcus Garvey (Chevannes 1995: 10), who appeared to have prophesised the reign of Haile Selassie (Watson 1974: 330) could fuse with strong Christian traditions. At its inception Rastafari had a pre-existing political base and a core theology familiar to all Christians. This core theology could be argued to be the great advantage of allegory over or as a facilitator for the explicit use of recent history.

Parallels with the Babylonian Captivity also helped legitimate the idea of Haile Selassie as a new Messiah: the closer the correspondence of recent history with Scripture, the more confidently and convincingly these links could be drawn on to affirm his status. The allegory, therefore, functions by giving religious narrative weight to the forced movement of so many Africans to the Americas. It turns oppression into a step on a pre-ordained and righteous path to glory, giving some meaning to past suffering and promising future redemption and restoration. This is consistent with the great import placed on positivity in Rastafari: at the level of language, the changes consciously made on this basis have led to considerable divergence between Jamaican patois and the 'Iyaric' language of Rastafari as the latter has attempted to minimise negative connotations in its vocabulary (Simpson 1985: 289). The establishment of a

divine plan in history is an important aspect of Christian theology's influence on scholarship generally (cf. notes on apocalypticism, Chapter 3, and St Augustine, Chapters 2 and 5), and the role played by Babylon as the Americas here is exactly the same as that of Babylon as Rome in Revelation, transferring biblical narratives and thus the history of God's chosen people beyond 'Bible Lands' and into contemporary politics. Indeed, Haile Selassie's own use of biblical epithets shows the same concern for emphasising significance in this greater, religious history: his titles drew on Isaiah ('Conquering Lion of Judah') and Revelation ('King of Kings', 'Lord of Lords') (Chevannes 1995: 10). Some reference to Rome also survives within the Rastafarian usage of Babylon, with reference to its status as the centre of the Roman Catholic Church, seen as colluding with states and with colonialism (Simpson 1985: 289). Beyond even this, the movements and relocations of Babylon in Rastafarianism are growing yet more complex. The socio-political appeal of Rastafari has proven broader than its original Jamaican context, and indeed has found support beyond African diaspora communities, both in other groups marginalised by colonialism (Maori in New Zealand) and increasingly in Africa itself (Savishinsky 1994: 19-20). The best-known expression of the Rastafarian concept of Babylon is in popular reggae music[277], but the same usage is found in traditional Rastafarian Nyahbinghi[262] chants.

Heritage and identity in modern Iraq

Iraq's foundation and questions of national identity

Iraq is a young state, often considered to have been set up by European powers with too little regard for older cultural affinities and boundaries the new borders of the early-twentieth century Middle East ignored. It is not true, however, that the Ottoman provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul were thrown together arbitrarily. The designation of the whole area as al-ᶜiraq is certainly over a thousand years old, and is found in the geographies of Ibn Hauqal and Yakut Al-Rumi (Bahrani 1998: 165). Moreover, the influence of Baghdad could be felt throughout this area, and had never been confined only to the province that bore its name. One example of this ambiguous relationship would be the way in which nineteenth-century European travellers described in Chapter 4 used the city as a hub for all three provinces, the Abbé de Beauchamp and Claudius Rich both living there for substantial periods.

There is a tradition of capital cities with pan-Mesopotamian territory and power in central Iraq going back to the reign of the first Neo-Babylonian king Nabopolassar (626-605 BC), and interrupted only by the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 and the subsequent Turkoman 'Il-Khanate' period 1258-1534 CE, during which strong centralised power was absent and Baghdad's role as capital supplanted by Tabriz in north-western Iran (Abdullah 2003: 43). Rather than creating something wholly new, therefore, the establishment of the British Mandate following the First World War was perhaps most significant in changing international relationships and reinforcing an existing pattern of centralisation:

> The new boundaries, drawn up after the war, forced Iraq to reorient itself away from what had once been the Ottoman Empire. Both Anatolia and Syria suddenly became different countries with new borders separating communities and disrupting centuries-old trade routes. While these issues represented formidable obstacles, perhaps the greatest asset to the establishment of the modern Iraqi state was the long history of the centrality of Baghdad and the gradual extension of its hegemony over the rest of the country including Sulaymaniyya and parts of Kurdistan.
>
> (Abdullah 2003: 123)

A significant exception to this hegemony was Kuwait, which was already under British control to a great extent prior to 1914, and which, though part of Ottoman Basra, had always retained substantial autonomy (Matthews 1993: 136-137). Its future as a separate state was effectively guaranteed by a July 1914 Anglo-Ottoman agreement, specifying Kuwait's borders and legitimating Britain's special authority in the (still Ottoman) region (Ovendale 1998 (1992): 7-8). The separation of Kuwait, then, while certainly a product of British economic interest (as a terminus of the proposed British version of the Baghdad railway originally conceived by Germany), did not constitute a sudden or unexpected appropriation of an area controlled by Baghdad prior to the establishment of nation-states and borders. The extent to which the formation of modern Iraq was subject to fleeting European economic concerns, while significant, should not therefore be emphasised to the exclusion of a pre-existing Iraq with comparable borders and an economic and administrative hub, if not always a true capital, in Baghdad. Indeed, while the assertion of Iraq's

borders as arbitrary is usually intended as a criticism of British imperialism, it is potentially much more damaging for Iraq itself:

> [T]he argument on the 'artificiality' of Iraq... refuses to take history into account, and it is used more often than not to sustain a bankrupt policy on the part of certain interests, in both the Arab world and the West, ostensibly to demonize the Ba^{c}thist regime but in reality delegitimizing Iraq itself.
>
> (Fattah 2003: 50)

Although this assessment was in part considering the legitimation of Saddam Hussein through the perceived need for a 'strong' central government, the argument remains relevant, and its implications serious and immediate, in the post-Saddam era, where political freedom, independence, interdependence and representation are central concerns for all involved. The legitimacy of Iraq as a state and that state's right to self-government is seriously undermined by the assertion that the state is 'artificial', hence ungovernable and unsustainable. For the same reason the claim of artificiality has served to excuse tyranny in the past (Fattah 2003: 49) and economic exploitation by foreign powers in the present (Black 2004; Chatterjee 2004; Klein 2004). I agree with Fattah, therefore, that the claim to artificiality is both historically unconvincing and politically dangerous.

Continuity at this macro level, however, does not automatically imply stability, or that there was little at stake for different ethnic, political and religious interests in the new state. Rather, with such diverse legitimate stakeholders of whom many want forms of regional autonomy but few talk of separatism (the

largest and obvious exception being Kurdish groups, although perhaps supporters of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's so-called 'al-Qa^{c}eda in Iraq' should also be included here, since the al-Qa^{c}eda ambition of a new Caliphate is a direct challenge to the existence and borders of all current Middle Eastern governments), Iraq's national identity has been a site of intense conflict. It should come as no surprise that the past has been of great importance here, or that huge efforts have been made to shape its representation in support of present-day political goals.

An appropriate starting point for this topic is the Ottoman 'reconquest' of Iraq in 1831. In reality this was more of a centralisation and reassertion of Ottoman power than a reconquest of lost territory. The governors of both Baghdad and Basra were mamluk, while in Mosul the al-Jalili family were semi-autonomous. When Da^{c}ud Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, refused to comply with the so-called *Nizam-i Cedid* (New Order) and give up his office, an army led by ^{c}Ali Rida Pasha, governor of Aleppo, captured Da^{c}ud Pasha and put the three provinces under direct rule from Istanbul (Tripp 2002: 14). As a result, the provinces were more heavily affected by the Ottoman drive for reform based on European systems of government and, crucially, education. The failure of these reforms to prevent the continuation of old hierarchies alongside the introduction of European-style education that did have an impact on political thought and activity would lead ultimately to the Young Turks, and to the rapid transformation of the terms of political participation throughout the Ottoman Empire.

> The Young Turk revolution of 1908, which forced the Sultan to reintroduce the Ottoman constitution and saw the emergence into the open of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), allowed many of the hitherto suppressed currents of political opinion within the three Mesopotamian provinces to find public expression, as they did elsewhere in the empire. The proliferation of clubs, groups and societies after 1908, as well as the explosion of journals and newspapers (an estimated sixty titles were published at various times in the three provinces in the years following the revolution of 1908), is testimony to the political engagement of growing numbers in Mosul, Baghdad and Basra.
>
> (Tripp 2002: 22)

It was thus a highly unstable Ottoman Empire that entered the First World War, and one widely expected to be succeeded by a very different political landscape regionally. In the short term the Iraqi provinces came under the rule of another empire: in 1914 the British army occupied Basra, followed by Baghdad in 1917 and Mosul in 1918. Iraq was officially ruled by British Mandate from 1920. This arrangement in turn immediately gave fuel to a nationalist movement aiming at independence. The British solution was the installation of the Hashemite Emir Faisal as King Faisal I in 1921. This move involved both practical and symbolic concerns, of which the latter are bound up with heritage. One advantage of Faisal was his Hashemite lineage, through which he could claim descent from the Prophet (Abdullah 2003: 130). Saddam Hussein was later to claim Hashemite descent for this reason, although the implications of this did not include a thawing of relations with the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan, and the Iraqi president's political and military elite was always drawn from his actual tribe of Abu-Nasser (Hassan 1999: 96-98).

British archaeologists in Iraq

The period of the British Mandate and the Hashemite monarchy also involved a reinforcement of Britain's archaeological interests in Iraq. This is the period of Leonard Woolley's famous discoveries at Ur (Woolley 1950 (1929)). Following their period together as both archaeologists and spies, resulting not only in detailed geographical information for the British government but also in an acclaimed piece of archaeological survey work (Woolley and Lawrence 2003 (1914-1915)), T.E. Lawrence went on to become more deeply involved in politics, advising in the Arab revolt led by Sharif Husain of Mecca and his sons, including Faisal, while Woolley continued with archaeology and became one of its best-known and most respected practitioners.

One of the most important British figures in Iraq's political history, Gertrude Bell, was also heavily involved with the country's heritage and archaeology. She was officially Oriental Secretary to Civil Commissioner Arnold Wilson in the original 1920 British Mandate administration, but her actual role was unique and wide-ranging. In politics she is remembered for the influence of her views on Iraqi self-government, of which she became a strong advocate, although continuing to see a senior, even paternalistic role for Britain in managing the country's affairs (Tripp 2002: 39). She was instrumental in the installation of King Faisal (Winstone 2004: 368), and arguably in speeding the end of the British Mandate. In archaeology it was she who, as Director of Antiquities, presided over the foundation of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad (which opened in June 1926; Bell died on 12 July of the same year) and the introduction of new laws restricting the export of Iraqi antiquities, guaranteeing Iraq a share in

material excavated by foreign archaeologists (Matthews 1997: 59). Bell was also responsible for regulating the quality of excavation methods, and for requirements that teams excavating in Iraq had, for example, an epigraphist, an architect and a photographer (O'Keefe and Prott 1984: 46). Under her auspices British archaeology in Iraq flourished, and the legacy of this patronage can still be felt: her memorial fund formed the core of funding for the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (whose full name still carries the epithet "Gertrude Bell Memorial"), founded in 1936.

Bell was adventurous, and travelled extensively in Iraq without a motor car and with only her servants for a male escort (Schiffer 2001: 309). She also spoke excellent Arabic, and in the First World War had been assigned by the British Secret Service to promote Arab uprisings against the Ottoman government. She visited the excavations at Babylon in April 1909 (Andrae and Boehmer 1989: 34 (Deutsch)/122 (Eng.)), and would later be responsible for the decision to send finds from pre-war German excavations to Berlin, first immediately after the War and against the wishes of High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox and the advice of T.E. Lawrence, both of whom advocated that they go instead to the British Museum (Winstone 2004: 375), and later by contacting Walter Andrae in Berlin (see Chapter 6). While this probably had more to do with her good relations with and respect for the German excavators than with legal niceties, there was ethical consistency in these actions, since a retrospective antiquities law would have been unthinkable from the British (and more specifically the British Museum) perspective.

Gertrude Bell retained her position in the early years of the monarchy, and Amatzia Baram notes Faisal's unconcern at the continued European control of archaeology in Iraq:

> [A] few observations can be made. In the first place, while King Faisal I was very particular about the choice of the man who would run his Ministry of Education (i.e., Sati^{c} al-Husri), as he wanted to ensure that a radical pan-Arabist would be in charge of molding the minds of the Iraqi younger generation, he was perfectly happy to have the Department of Antiquities headed by a British colonial officer. Indeed, the first non-European Director of Antiquities, none other than al-Husri, was only appointed as late as October 1934... Secondly, apparently because they were all aware of the fact that the digs were being conducted in hopes of discovering pre-Arab and pre-Islamic civilizations, neither Faisal nor any of his ministers... considered the need to enact a Law of Antiquities until they were prodded to do so by Bell.
>
> (Baram 1994: 282)

There are some qualifications to be made here. Winstone describes Faisal as "anxious to protect the country's archaeological heritage" (Winstone 2004: 374), and his government's decision to appoint Gertrude Bell as (hon.) Director of Antiquities was an effective way to ensure such protection. Bell maintained strong friendships with many of the archaeologists while still proving a powerful advocate for the claims of the Iraqi state. Mallowan recalls that,

> During my first two seasons at Ur, Gertrude herself acted as Director of Antiquities and would spend several days battling with Woolley over their share of the finds. The division was supposed to be on a fifty-fifty basis, but no tigress could have safeguarded Iraq's rights better.
>
> (Mallowan 1977: 41)

With regard to Baram's second point, the responsibility of enacting a Law of Antiquities really lay with the British Mandate authorities since its establishment, as Baram acknowledges, was specified as a requirement in the Mandate Charter itself. The fact remains, however, that in archaeology British influence, and that of Bell in particular, continued prominently and formally after the Mandate.

Heritage and archaeology in Baᶜthist Iraq

The role of heritage in Baᶜthist Iraq has been explored by Baram, who has studied the selective preservation and establishment of cultural festivals as well as uses of ancient material and iconography (Baram 1991, 1994). More recently, Zainab Bahrani has discussed both Saddam Hussein's association of himself with the militant kings of Assyria and Babylonia mentioned in the Old Testament, and his representation in terms of these leaders' despotic reputations in foreign discourses (Bahrani 1998, Bahrani 2003). Baram charts a gradual permeation of pre-Islamic Mesopotamian components into Iraqi national identity during the 1930s-1950s, but a major boost in 1958 following the successful coup of ᶜAbd al-Karim Qasim and an even greater one with the Baᶜthist coup of 1968 (Baram 1994: 300-303).

Saddam Hussein made extensive use of the ancient past, investing heavily in heritage and, particularly, in enormous reconstructions at Babylon[278], work on which began in 1978. Archaeological work was well supported by the state, and Iraqi and foreign excavations and research projects continued throughout the

Iran-Iraq War, with a brief return of large-scale foreign research projects, many intended as long-term, between that war's end and the 1990-91 Gulf War (Matthews 2003a: 19), after which foreign projects ceased and Iraqi projects were greatly reduced.

For the promotion of nationalism by the Iraqi government the ancient past had the advantage of being shared – something in which all Iraqis might potentially feel a stake. It also differentiated secular Iraq from its revolutionary neighbour. Following the revolution Iran's new government set about consciously removing the many symbols of pre-Islamic heritage associated with the Shah (such as his own title and Peacock Throne), and a major shift in emphasis to the Islamic heritage began. Iraq, whose Baᶜth government was at least nominally socialist and explicitly secular, was already well positioned to emphasise its difference from the Iranian theocracy. Saddam Hussein himself is the author of a (probably ghost-written) novel set in Babylon: *Zabibah and the King*[292], published in 2001. The novel is an allegory of contemporary Iraq, in which Zabibah represents the Iraqi people, and the king of Babylon Saddam Hussein himself. The latter shows uncharacteristic doubt and vulnerability, and succession is discussed, leading to some speculation that it might hint at Saddam Hussein's own intentions for the transfer of power (Smith 2001). Previously Saddam's identification with Assyrian and Babylonian kings (Fig. 7.6) had everything to do with their strength, certainty and power through force, themes encapsulated in what is possibly Baghdad's most famous modern monument, the giant 'Victory Arches' completed in 1989 (Fig. 7.7; cf. Al-Khalil (Makiya) 1991).

Other initiatives under Saddam Hussein were less benevolent toward cultural heritage. One example is draining of southern Iraq's marshlands, areas that had long acted as refuges for political dissenters and opponents of the government. Their environmental conditions have effectively rendered them remote and difficult of access, harder to monitor than the rest of the country. This changed in the 1990s, when Saddam Hussein began the systematic destruction of this environment. Following the Shi^{c}ite uprisings in the wake of the Gulf War, which did not receive the foreign military support they had been led to expect (Colin Powell had successfully lobbied for US observation of the will of the UN in this case, and the coalition did not have a mandate for regime change (Bush and Scowcroft 2003 (1998)) and which the government severely punished,

> Some of those who eluded capture and death escaped into the marshes of southern Iraq, where they were given haven by the Marsh Arabs, a group of some 200,000 Shi^{c}as whose culture traces back to the ancient Sumerians. The retaliatory responses of the government have included draining up to two-thirds of the marshes and exterminating several Marsh Arab tribes. The government has cut off the tributaries that feed the marshes, blocked the entrance of food and medicine, and shelled the reed huts in which the people live. In September 1993 a government campaign forced tens of thousands of Marsh Arabs to flee to Iran. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that some 7,000 Iraqi refugees entered Iran in one year, June 1993 to June 1994, and SAIRI [the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] reported that another 6,000 severely malnourished Shi^{c}as entered Iran in late 1994.
>
> (Wiley 2003: 159)

Variants on the phrase "whose culture traces back to the ancient Sumerians" are to be found in almost all popular references to the persecution of the Marsh Arabs. Heritage was an important part of rhetoric against the marsh drainage, even when the humanitarian crisis was on the scale described by Wiley. As Robert Fisk put it, "The man who rebuilt Babylon in his own image was destroying Sumeria" (Fisk 2001). The link was made partly for rhetorical value, but also because it emphasised the inappropriateness of Saddam Hussein as a custodian for the Mesopotamian heritage.

We must also consider the impact of Saddam Hussein's rule on the 'intangible' heritage, a term which can be misleading, and whose tangible qualities are easily appreciated in the Iraqi case. Intangible heritage has become a standard phrase in the vocabulary of Cultural Resource Management (CRM)/Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) specialists, and is considered to denote those aspects of cultural heritage that are harder to legislate for on the basis that there is not necessarily a material or clearly definable object to protect (e.g. Handler 2003: 356-357). Most commonly this means the cultural practices, memories and identities of living people, and so the suggestion that legislation to protect this form of heritage does not or has not until recently existed is inaccurate – protection of what we now call the intangible heritage is implicit in the most fundamental human rights legislation. The protection of cultural heritage in this form consists principally in a person's right to live and in their freedom of expression (and by extension communication), both of which are as tangible, and their denial as visible, as the destruction of physical artefacts and sites. This, however, is not to say that the problem of such protection is a simple one,

or that a concern for cultural heritage does not raise important issues that concern for the other basic freedoms of water and food, shelter, physical safety, status in law, democratic rights and education would not in themselves include; merely that the intangible heritage is already a part of this package, and that the most effective legislation in this field will always be that which protects human life and freedom of expression, since that is where this heritage primarily exists.

If not completely suppressed, cultural works carry their own survival mechanisms, and there is significant interdependence between memory, cultural identity and freedom in the present. Exposure to diverse cultural sources, and ideally to critical treatment of those sources, engenders the ability to consider a world outside that of one's own present-day reality, to be aware of the possibility – the inevitability – of change and difference in the world, and to experience the humanity of someone else, particularly someone whose outlook differs substantially from one's own. All of these capacities are anathema to political dictatorship, to the denial of human rights, and to the oppression of others based on a perceived inherent inferiority. For this reason most aspects of heritage termed 'intangible' could more accurately be described as questions of cultural rights or cultural freedom. This carries with it the implication that policy relating to them ought to be treated in these terms, which perhaps helps to explain the feeling that they are not adequately treated in cultural heritage legislation that was originally intended to preserve objects whose very stasis was perceived to be their most important characteristic. Rights and freedoms, by contrast, are performed actively and in need of constant renewal. As was noted in Chapter 2, identity at any level above the individual requires externalisation,

i.e. representation. Without the capacity for this expression the ability to resist propaganda or the will of the state are greatly reduced.

How, then, to speak of the damage to cultural rights and freedoms that Iraq has undergone, not only very recently but under Saddam Hussein, whose ability to prevent freedom of speech and expression underpinned his rule for over two decades. Kanan Makiya's *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Makiya 1998 (1989)), first published in 1989 under the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil, describes the mechanisms through which Saddam Hussein's control became so complete. Despite the subject matter, the author's approach in describing the rise and consolidation of the *Mukhabarat*, the Iraqi president's secret police, of torture as routine, and of the establishment of an all-pervading culture of fear and distrust is sober and academic. Only rarely does Makiya allow himself to lament the impact of these changes in general terms:

> Authority used to be the butt of popular jokes, anecdotes, and satirical poems, cultural safety valves that provided relief from the traditional oppressiveness of the state. But all that is gone now. No one dares ridicule authority any longer in Iraq because everyone is afraid. The tone of political culture has become Kafkaesque: saturated with a sense of the impersonality of sinister and impenetrable forces, operating on helpless individuals, who nonetheless intuit that they are being buffeted about by a bizarre, almost transcendental kind of rationality.
>
> (Makiya 1998: 45)

This is what destroys the 'intangible' heritage, and there is nothing intangible about it. It can be identified, defined, often quantified (especially where, as with

the marshlands of southern Iraq, economic and environmental change have been absolutely inseparable from change in cultural practices (Hillel 1994: 101-102)), and most importantly directly opposed under international law. Although its situation has been extreme, Iraq is far from alone as a twentieth-century example of strongly linked political and cultural repression. One reason to talk in terms of cultural rights and freedoms is that it helps us to think on this scale, and to remember why political oppression is a matter for our concern as archaeologists and humanist scholars, as well as human beings with a collective responsibility to the promotion of human rights in the present. This broad understanding of the problem also helps us to incorporate the wider view of the construction of historical knowledge endorsed throughout this thesis.

Babylon in the present

In 2003 a US-led coalition invaded and occupied Iraq, deposing and ultimately arresting Saddam Hussein and many other senior Ba^{c}ath party figures, most notably Ali Hasan al-Majid, suspected to hold personal responsibility for the gassing of civilians at Halabja, the first attack of its kind since the Second World War. Others, including Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qasay, were killed. The legality of these actions, and of many decisions made during Iraq's occupation, is still hotly debated, and Iraq's political and economic future remains unclear (Makiya 2003). It is without firm knowledge of the final outcome of these debates, therefore, that they must be discussed in relation to the fate of Iraq's cultural heritage. It is not possible, however, to discuss the latter in isolation from the former: as the discussion above has shown, heritage

– both the physical remains of the past and the so-called 'intangible' heritage, indeed memory itself – is extremely sensitive to events in the present.

In the immediate aftermath of the Iraqi government's collapse and the occupation of Iraq, several days of looting saw most government buildings stripped. This was predictable, and indeed predicted, by the coalition, who had drawn up a list of buildings to protect in the city. On this list the Iraq Museum was ranked second, following the central bank. This list, however, apparently did not reach the commanders responsible for planning and executing the occupation of Baghdad itself. At a public forum held at the British Museum on June 15, 2004, Peter Galbraith, former US Ambassador to Croatia, stated that he believed the list, approved by Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, had disappeared "just above the uniformed military" (Snow et al. 2004). As a result the museum was not protected. This position differs from that of Matthew Bogdanos, who asserts that for much of the time such protection was impossible and that delays in responding to appeals for protection resulted from inevitable battlefield confusion and an advance into Baghdad that, Bogdanos argues, outstripped the expectations and ability to keep up of military planners (Bogdanos 2005: 506-507). Whatever the case, this failure to protect the museum came to symbolize for critics the ignorance of and indifference to history and culture represented by, particularly, the attitude of the American government. At the same time many of Iraq's other museums and libraries – indeed, the state library itself – were similarly victims of looting and its attendant damage, but it was the Iraq Museum itself that came to represent them all in global media coverage. Some information about Iraq's cultural and

historical importance had been conveyed through the media during the build-up to war, and so public knowledge was at least substantial enough to provoke great indignation when the looting actually occurred. I have written elsewhere about media coverage of these events (Seymour 2004, 2005), also analysed by Susan Pollock (Pollock 2003, 2005).

Inevitably, the high level of attention initially focused on this crisis waned, and the subsequent looting of sites across Iraq has received little coverage. This looting is of greater concern to archaeologists than even the damage done to cultural institutions such as the Iraq Museum, because the looting of sites represents an even greater loss of information. As is easily appreciated when faced with the aerial photographs of low tell sites in southern Iraq, now peppered with the marks of hundreds of small-scale illicit excavations (Fig. 7.8), the damage done means that it is not only the material that is actually removed from the site that loses its context, but a much larger category of disturbed material. The loss to humanity's knowledge of its own past this represents will only become clear gradually, as future researchers at critically important sites find their ability to analyse and interpret material permanently handicapped by the disruption. Babylon was the site of no such looting; instead, the army camp (Fig. 7.9) that protected it in the aftermath of the occupation has itself damaged the site irreparably. Among the main problems which emerged once archaeologists were able to assess damage at the site were: the passage of heavy vehicles across much of central Babylon; the use of material from the site in sandbags; the importing, when this practice had ceased, of material from other archaeological sites for use in sandbags, and which becomes mixed with

that of Babylon as these sandbags biodegrade; the spreading of chemically treated gravel over large parts of the site; the use of part of the site as a helipad; the placement of toilet blocks on the site; and the surface disruption attending any occupation on the scale of a large military camp. Reports are now available on the details of this damage (Curtis 2005; Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Poland: Bureau of Defence Matters 2004).

For the present, the only accessible part of the site of Babylon itself is that section of it that has been reconstructed in Berlin. Andrae's vision has remained a defining one in terms of archaeology's presentation of Babylon to the public. At one time this looked set to change: among their several purposes the reconstructions at Babylon were originally imagined as a potential international tourist attraction. The prospect of such tourism, or even of a return to normal and safe life in Iraq, currently appears very distant.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Idea and Knowledge

Having analysed the history of Babylon as idea and representation through many forms and approaches, we can now return to some of the broader questions surrounding the development of discourse over time and the role of representation within it. This chapter analyses the patterns we have observed in terms of the relationships between different epistemologies and forms of knowledge, and the particular role of representation in those relationships. Although the subject matter of this discussion is philosophical, its purpose is primarily historical, focusing on the ways in which diverse epistemologies, ideas, understandings and knowledge relate to each other in practice and in history. The history of approaches to Babylon is an excellent historical case study through which to examine these relationships at work.

As has already been noted, a discussion of Babylon traditionally leads to a meditation upon its fall. The city is indeed falling, along with every other component of the historical grand narrative. Babylon had a place, albeit an unenviable one, in the biblical/classical world carefully reconciled in the Middle Ages and developed through many permutations to become the modern metanarrative of progress. Today the tide of scholarly thought is definitely away from grand narratives and toward understandings of history that, though dominated by interconnections as never before, nonetheless place great value on the particular and the local for their own sake, and that are by instinct democratic in that it they are profoundly wary of regarding one particular

grouping or locale as more significant in terms of the human condition than any other. The approaches now developing are extremely exciting because they open up a wider and more complex world. The various manifestations and offshoots of postcolonial studies, fields dealing constantly with the mechanics of the interconnected and of the particular, represent a revival of that beauty seen by medievalists in the encyclopaedic nature of their scholarly work: the great but finite complexity of a world of particulars, all of which must be understood in relation to one another. This new model, to the extent that it exists at all or in the singular, differs from the old in two crucial respects, however. Firstly, though all is explicable within its terms, it allows of dissonance and discord in all things because these are reflective of the multiplicity of perspectives and perceptions that make up human experience (Loomba 1998: 13). The work of subaltern literature, for example, is not to erase and replace the colonial archive but to complement and complicate it (Gosden 2001; Spivak 1996). Second, it is without an obvious linear focus. Previously there have been two such foci: the divine Will, as in Medieval and Renaissance conceptions, and the fate of Man/humanity (as in Enlightenment, romantic and modern models). Although humanity's fate as defined by the will of the gods is of great antiquity, the divine as structuring linear history is medieval, a product specifically of Jewish apocalypticism but adopted by both Christianity and Islam, whereby the history of the world is not cyclical and will end, and whose entry into historiography is usually attributed by philosophers of history to Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* (Herrera 2001: 22). This history "sees humanity as in process toward a not yet attained but ultimate condition of mankind" (Bourke 1995: 299) at the end of time. Importantly, this type of

history made a project of the unification and harmonisation of source material, working toward a single figuration, to use Auerbach's term, of humanity and history:

> Dante is not the first to subject all the material of human history to the figural conception; biblical history, Jewish and Christian, came to be seen as universal human history, and all pagan historical material had to be inserted and adapted to this framework. Especially Roman history was interpreted by Saint Augustine and other patristic authors as a path of Christian universal history and of the plan of providence. Medieval authors followed this tradition, and very often used it for political purposes, in the long struggle between imperium and sacerdotium.
>
> (Auerbach 1952: 6)

Such approaches, with their ultimately religious structures and understandings, were gradually supplanted by models of humanity's progress in which human agency increasingly made history until, in modern thought, progress became the goal and responsibility of humanity, something that it was possible to strive for and obtain. Such control over history is utterly alien to *De Civitate Dei*, but the linear structure is nonetheless shared (Ricoeur 1965: 81).

The modern linear perspective places great importance on philosophical models, because these are potential keys to utopias that can theoretically be achieved by human agency:

> Utopias are by definition located in the future, and it is a unique aspect of modernity that it conceives of itself as a project, leading to some future state. Yet this project is forever unfinished (Smart 1992: 183). The modern condition strives for some sort of

> closure that cannot be achieved. Both modern philosophy and modern state politics operate on the premise that perfection can be achieved, provided that a new foundation for thought and action can be secured.
>
> (Thomas 2004: 3)

Finley points out the importance of remembering utopia's etymology: utopia is literally nowhere (Finley 1975: 178), and surely to some extent disillusionment is an inevitable product of utopian projects. It is certainly an actual product, as we can see in the modern flowering of dystopian fiction, whose greatest exemplars, *1984* (Orwell 2000 (1949)) and *Brave New World* (Huxley 1955 (1932)) were both written in late modernity. The world has also witnessed the dangers attached to thinking of human history as project and destiny, which in the twentieth century gave sanction to scientific racism. Karl Popper dedicated his argument against historical prediction as an intellectual goal, *The Poverty of Historicism*, to the "memory of countless men and women of all creeds or nations or races who fell victims to the fascist and communist belief in Inexorable Laws of Historical Destiny" (Popper 1957: v). It should not be surprising that Postcolonialism is so much less utopian in character, generally eschewing overarching structures and pointing toward more complex and pluralistic histories whose patterns need not be progressive or degenerative, and which lead neither to a utopia nor to the Last Judgement. There is a particular passage in Conrad's *An Outpost of Progress* whose prescience in this respect is astonishing:

> They lived like blind men in a large room, aware only of what came in contact with them (and of that only imperfectly), but unable to see the general aspect of things. The

> river, the forest, all the great land throbbing with life, were like a great emptiness... The river seemed to come from nowhere and flow nowhither. It flowed through a void. Out of that void, at times, came canoes, and men with spears in their hands would suddenly crowd the yard of the station... Kayerts sat on his chair and looked down on the proceedings, understanding nothing.
>
> (Conrad 1990 (1897): 9)

To be an envoy of 'progress', Conrad suggests, is a lonely, uncertain, and profoundly ignorant state. This negative view of imperial knowledge and awareness of its narrowness has since taken hold and now affects debates within humanistic studies of all kinds. One implication is a radically reduced significance for previously critical historical loci such as Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, imperial Rome or (perhaps particularly) classical Athens, because their stories are no longer considered to structure the whole of human history. This, at least, is the theory. Cultural canons have not historically changed quickly, however (Moser 1998), and as icons in representation alone one would expect the constituent parts of the grand narrative to prove tenacious. In the case of Babylon there is already a long history of temporal and geographical displacement beginning with Revelation, and the continuation of this practice seems far more likely than consignment to oblivion. In one sense this makes the city important in a distinctly pre-modern, moral and quasi-religious way. If we return to the rough distinction between classical sources on Babylon as more descriptive and biblical sources as more moralising (Chapter 3), we will see its reestablishment here very clearly, and remarkably intact after so many integrations and reconciliations of the two groups. For a Babylon whose meaning is abstract, ahistorical and largely moral biblical sources are far more

relevant, and therefore are drawn upon more extensively. This is true on the one hand for twentieth-century images of the Tower of Babel, rarely located in a historical Iraq and no longer related to ziggurats but only to an allegorical or even atheistic and metaphorical reading of Genesis, and on the other for the many cities that have been called Babylon – Paris, London, New York, Los Angeles – where the prophets and particularly Revelation are the source. It is the classical sources that are directly affected by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft excavations; their descriptions do become less authoritative, and have been supplanted as the most authoritative sources on the geography of Babylon.

Hybrid knowledge

The material in this thesis gives us practical examples of almost every conceivable transformation in epistemology and knowledge that a historical subject might undergo. Certainly all the epistemological bases and forms of legitimation of knowledge mentioned in the discussion above are represented. Particularly interesting are the abiding presence and influence of mythic knowledge and the near ubiquity of hybrid understandings. On the one hand mythic knowledge is present where we might instinctively expect knowledge that was neatly and absolutely theocratic; in the case of Revelation the allegorical aspect of Babylon's use is mythic, as is the archetype of the worldly city in Saint Augustine. On the other we find both mythic and theocratic knowledge permeating humanist empiricism with regard to Babylon. When explorers, antiquaries and archaeologists sought the Tower of Babel that search could be defined as theocratic or, where Genesis is seen as a reliable (as

opposed to infallible) reference to an actual building regardless of whether that building really was the site of divine punishment and the Confusion of Tongues, as humanist. The transition is surprisingly hard to detect, since the terms do not change: In the early twentieth century King was typical in stating that, "To the north of Marduk's temple [i.e. Esagila] rose its ziggurat, the Tower of Babel, known to Babylonians of all ages as E-temen-anki, 'The House of the Foundation Stone of Heaven and Earth'" (King 1919: 73), thus assimilating the new archaeological and Assyriological discoveries into the biblical framework without ambiguity or qualifications. The tension between theocratic, mythic and humanist knowledge in Athansius Kircher (1679, Chapter 5) is particularly pronounced, originating in and mirroring the author's attempt to reconcile biblical, classical and empirical sources. Voltaire's use of Babylon champions the use of the past as an effectively timeless, placeless setting for storytelling, i.e. as a site for mythic knowledge, but only in a way that requires an empiricist approach against which to kick. Medieval travellers (Chapter 4), whose visits to Babylon we are inclined to privilege on the grounds that they involve empirical observation, frequently turn out to be primarily theocratic, displaying a tendency for the observed world to be tested against that of the text rather than vice versa. The medieval encyclopaedic compilation and resolution of written sources (Chapter 5) is also theocratic in a broad sense, but could also be argued to contain an Aristotelian forerunner to the Cartesian privileging of rational thought in the high value placed on logic, particularly important in medieval European education and in evaluating, resolving and sometimes rejecting incompatible claims. The conceivably equally encyclopaedic outcome of a postmodern and postcolonial scholarship that rejects grand narratives and is

sceptical of claims to objectivity would be thoroughly humanist in the importance it places on the human subject and subjective knowledge, but also prone to the development of unchallengeable – and in this sense theocratic – claims on the basis of individual subjectivity and the equal validity of subjects' perceptions.

Our key moment, the German excavations and German reception of Babylon in the early twentieth century (Chapter 6), shares with Kircher a visible strain in the effort to resolve different kinds of knowledge into an absolute. The attempt at resolution proved antagonistic, hence the crisis of Babel-Bibel. The perceived value of excavations in terms of producing knowledge is obviously empirical, but the nationalist or imperialist desire to lay claim to the discovery of biblical sites where the production of extra knowledge about them was arguably irrelevant is a different matter. To the extent that this is about knowledge at all it is theocratic. *Sardanapal: Historische Pantomime* can be seen as an acknowledgement of and an attempt to redress the failure of academic research to satisfy the mythic component of people's understanding of Babylon. The development of a division that put this component outside the scope of archaeologists' work should not be taken for granted: the values attached to particular forms of knowledge are changeable and historically situated, and perhaps even now it is possible to discern some movement back toward a broader remit for archaeological interpretation, including serious academic consideration of communicating archaeology through fiction (Nelson 2003) and through media associated with the fictive and the mythic. Similarly, the nature and implications of literary fiction's interventions in historical discourse have

been analysed by Price (Price 1999), and the interplay between literature and history has been the subject of a volume edited by Caldicott and Fuchs (Caldicott and Fuchs 2003). This is a new exploration of an old idea: in some ways it echoes the Aristotelian view of poetry's value over history mentioned above. Michael Shanks could be seen as a key originator of the recent trend. His work has been particularly influential in introducing consideration of the human and creative elements in archaeological expression and practice (Shanks 1992). One recent volume (Jameson et al. 2003) is dedicated to the possibilities of academic archaeological engagement with and expression in the creative arts, a development better described as resurgent than new, while another (Joyce 2002) considers archaeological writing for its own sake and as an integral part of the interpretative process. The significance of Moser's work on representation and iconography lies in her demonstration of these elements as acting on interpretation and constituting arguments about the past in their own right (Moser 1992, 1998, 2001; Smiles and Moser 2005). This resurgence is closely related to – indeed, its legitimacy as a source of new interpretative strategies is dependent upon – the broader acknowledgement of academic archaeological writing and practice as situated, contingent and subjective (see Wylie 1992). Robert Koldewey occupies a significant point on this trajectory, as part of the turn toward detached and transparent description as the proper goal of a scholar describing an ancient site. Within the specific context of Iraq the departure Koldewey's publication represents from preceding English and French works on the Mesopotamian past is substantial, as was discussed in Chapter 6. With Babylon as with archaeology more generally, however, some resurgence in the role of narrative can be seen more recently: a recent article by Van De Mieroop,

entitled *Reading Babylon* (Van De Mieroop 2003), focuses on the ideological messages of Babylon's monumental architecture and its self-representation in texts, while Bahrani's *The Graven Image* (Bahrani 2003) analyses the roles of representation within Babylonian and Assyrian culture more broadly.

There is value in all these forms and manifestations of knowledge, and certainly a great deal that is productive comes from their hybridity; the value of serendipity in such developments has already been mentioned (Chapter 7). This interplay of epistemological bases and understandings in fact, however, implies nothing in terms of their value in principle, or in terms of the archaeologist's ideal position in relation to, particularly, mythic forms of knowledge. Returning to sources on Babylon, an instructive example is the case of William Blake and his (probable (Butlin 1990: 93)) pairing and juxtaposition of Newton and Nebuchadnezzar (Chapter 5). Blake creates knowledge of a moral and theological kind, taking the history of Daniel and from it producing a visual meditation on reason, unreason, punishment and redemption. It is inappropriate to weigh this production of knowledge against the historical misrepresentation of Nebuchadnezzar (or even Nabonidus, see Chapter 3) as a crazed and piteous man/animal on some composite and absolute scale of merit, because allegorical art and humanistic Assyriology produce knowledge according to different criteria of value and truth. As has been demonstrated above, however, a splendid isolation of 'science' from 'art' is a fallacy, in this case realising that Blake's emotive image, though but a further mythologisation of Daniel's Nebuchadnezzar, directly affects conceptions of the historical king, and not only for those who believe in the literal truth of his years living as a wild beast.

On the one hand it is neither easy nor very natural to disentangle the different sources on a historical character, and on the other all representations of Nebuchadnezzar have something very basic in common: they share a signifier in the name Nebuchadnezzar, and for this reason alone are liable to connection and conflation in the viewer's memory and cognition. In many cases, but particularly those of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft *Sardanapal* (Chapter 6) and Long's *Babylonian Marriage Market* (Chapter 5), the intention is to blur such distinctions, and to naturalise or efface the application of a mythic framework of preconceptions to bear on new empirical research. In such blurring, and in the uncritical reproduction of stereotypes without empirical foundation in books that do claim such authority, hybrid knowledge poses serious problems for archaeologists. This said, it is a great mistake to think of the purpose of studying representation in archaeology as the identification and refutation of empirical inaccuracy ('errors' would imply that these are always accidental and made in ignorance) and stereotyping. This is useful work, with the prospect of incrementally improving popular representations of the past in the sense of bringing them into closer harmony with the archaeological research they represent, but it does not begin to reflect the full relevance and importance of representation for students of the human past. I fundamentally disagree with Baudrillard's much narrower definition of representation, which seems to regard it as a matter of truth and error, or as the dissonance between ideology and the real, material world of Marxism. Baudrillard argues that,

> Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real (even if this equivalence is utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the utopia of the principle of equivalence, *from the radical*

> *negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum.
>
> (Baudrillard 1994: 6)

It should be noted that Baudrillard's concerns are with the present, where he argues an extreme importance for hyperreality and the breakdown of any meaningful 'real' distinct from simulacra and simulation. His position stems from the study of signification and semiotics rather than metaphysics, and to some extent a proof of an absolute reality is not what matters here: for Baudrillard the hyperreal of meaningless signification would in any case keep us from that reality. Taken on these terms, however, historiography and the representation of the past make nonsense of the notion of the whole of representation as simulacrum. First, as we have already seen, the philosophical developments that have destabilised our concept of knowledge have situated truth-claims, not stripped them of meaning, and particularly not at the human level at which they are virtually always situated and with which we are dealing. All truth claims are not equal within a humanist discourse. Independently of this, however, and at the level of signification, Baudrillard does not account for value placed on the perception of the real. Representations – of the real or imagined, past, present or future – make different truth-claims on differing epistemological bases, and vary in the manner in which and degree to which their claims convince: take, for example, the obsessive concern for completeness, consistency and authenticity demonstrated in the Middle Earth of Tolkein. The world he creates is intended for readers to inhabit and believe in,

but it makes no claim to his subject's physical existence as does a real history or geography. Charles Dickens takes London as the setting for many of his works and describes it based on his own observation of the city; he may even include real historical characters and comment on real-world events within novels, yet he makes no claim for his stories as real, and he assumes the reader's ability to distinguish between the real and the fictive. The truth-claims these authors do make are mythic: both offer caricatures of human behaviours and qualities as truths in this sense, and make general moral assertions of a kind that confirm their status to the reader:

> It is a difficult matter, requiring careful historical and philological training, to distinguish the true from the synthetic or the biased in a historical presentation; but it is easy to separate the historical from the legendary in general. Their structure is different. Even where the legendary does not immediately betray itself by elements of the miraculous, by the repetition of well-known standard motives, typical patterns and themes, through neglect of clear details of time and place, and the like, it is generally quickly recognizable by its composition. It runs far too smoothly.
>
> (Auerbach 1953: 19)

Such clues are often communicated also by the format and presentation of a work. Certainly difficulties and ambiguities exist – historical novels provide an excellent example and, as narrative forms, I agree that "there exists a reciprocal – if not dialectical – relation between the two genres" (Price 1999: 21). Baudrillard's view, however, seems to be that hyperreality prevents the reader from making such distinctions at all. Representation does require a relationship with an object, but that object need not be real and the relationship is not necessarily an attempted equivalence: difference and dissonance between the

object and its representation can be strategies of the producer of that representation, for example. Representation always involves tensions between equivalence and dissonance, and that relationship is important in the functioning of representation and mimesis in communication (Melberg 1995: 178). To talk of 'false representation' is therefore misleading. It places Baudrillard's simulacra (the copy with no original) in opposition to 'true representation' when, as we have seen in this thesis, simulacra operate within representation and indeed within representations of the real, while these in turn can never constitute the perfect (and meaningless) 'true representation,' though they can bear very strong relationships of equivalence to a situated observation of the world. Is this false representation? Baudrillard sees representation as the failed attempt to produce a mirror of the world. The nearest position to this I can accept, and that can be supported by the observation of representational practice in this thesis, is that representation attempts produce many mirrors of perception and imagination, all situated though some claim otherwise, and whose relationships of equivalence and difference with their real or imagined objects define much of their meaning.

To reiterate my working definition of representation from Chapter 1, I described it as:

1. The communication, in any medium, of ideas, knowledge, or creative thought.
2. The study of that communication in its own right, as affecting and effecting the meaning and value of that which it purports to express.

The purpose of this study is to explore how that communication works. The better one understands representation, the more empowered one becomes in participation in discourse. Differentiation between different forms of knowledge is, as has been demonstrated, useful in interpretative and even ethical terms. How one acts on this understanding, however, depends in large part on what one considers archaeology *should* be. The current interest in the roles of oral history and narrative in archaeology, for example, show that this is an open debate. The goals of the archaeologist are not necessarily unified around the systematic exclusion, and even less the systematic devaluing of understandings of the past that are non-empirical. Attempts by archaeologists to engage with these other understandings are laudable in intent and potentially very constructive, realising the positive feedback loops of democratic criticism outlined above. The archaeologist has every right, and perhaps a professional duty, to assert their views on truth and falsehood within such discourse, and no doubt generally adds new insights to others' knowledge of the past through doing so. It does not follow that the archaeologist should be automatically hostile to other uses of the past. Archaeology and history have already won popular respect by consent, not coercion, and any attempt at the latter would be foolhardy and dangerous. The archaeologist's duty, based on their presumed belief in archaeology as a particularly rigorous and epistemologically valid way in which to investigate the past, is to the differentiation of understandings and the dissemination of their expert knowledge, not to destruction or censorship. Knowledge that can bear no questioning or competitors is not empirical knowledge at all: it is dogma.

Concluding summary

This thesis has examined many processes and patterns in the history of Babylon's representation. The most important of these can be summarised as follows:

Chapter 3 discussed some general but clear differences between biblical and Greek sources on the city, most importantly the relative moral emphasis of the biblical texts and relative attention to both physical and 'ethnographic' description in the Greek histories. The long-term significance of Berossus's marginalisation and disappearance, removing the only indigenous Babylonian account of the city in either tradition, was also noted. The tendency for single texts or passages to come to hold huge significance and whole varied traditions of their own was examined, with particular emphasis on Revelation/Apocalypse, origin of the Beast and Great Whore of Babylon.

In Chapters 4 and 5 the history of successive travellers visiting Babylon was analysed with reference to other representations of the city, changes in historiography and epistemology, and broader cultural context. The sequence of travellers was demonstrated to involve not simply a progressive acquisition of knowledge over time, but significant changes in the ways in which the site was observed and its meaning in history and culture understood. A growing role for humanist empiricism in epistemology substantially altered the purpose and potential of visiting an ancient site, even a biblically known site such as Babylon, and it is in this respect that the travel accounts of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries are relevant to the history of archaeology. The

changing significance of Babylon within different frameworks of knowledge received discussion: particularly important were the separations, ambiguities and complications of Dante's attempt, in the *Divine Comedy*, to build diverse biblical and classical elements into perhaps the grandest medieval 'Model of the universe,' Saint Augustine's development of the rhetorical opposition between Babylon and Jerusalem in *De Civitate Dei*, and Flemish images, including the iconic works of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, combining elements of Genesis and of Revelation in their relocation and Romanisation of the Tower of Babel, a practice which has continued into the present. Athanasius Kircher's unique compendium of knowledge on Babylon, *Turris Babel*, stands at the crossroads of Renaissance and modern humanism: in his inclusion of Pietro Della Valle's account and images, Kircher allowed observation to supplement textual, even scriptural, knowledge. In his approach to the Confusion of Tongues he also attempted to add new knowledge to the existing canon on Babylon in a way that was neither purely theocratic nor humanist, employing systematic and critical research to complement a literal reading of Genesis.

After Kircher the development and reinforcement of a separate empirical, sceptical and anti-theocratic tradition was observed, particularly at the site of Babylon itself: Carsten Niebuhr and the Abbé Joseph de Beauchamp are good examples of this change, and the separation continued to increase with the rise of archaeology as a recognised scholarly discipline. In a newly separate vein, then, came, who to a large extent established for the arts their subsequent dominance in representing the moral side of Babylon's identity, and did so with minimal reference to the physical Babylon. Centuries of reconciliation and

integration of the biblical and classical traditions, however, meant that this separation by no means perfectly reflected the biblical/classical division observed in Chapter 3. This older separation reasserts itself more convincingly in fictive and allegorical works of the twentieth century (Chapter 7), albeit with the roles of both biblical and classical texts greatly altered. In Koldewey's work (Chapter 6) the separation is perhaps as complete as it would become prior to the experiments in positivism of the New Archaeology, yet the same cannot be said of the German reception of Babylon and the work of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in promoting its discoveries. In the moment of archaeological exploration there were conflicts in knowledges and representations mythic, theocratic and empiricist. These conflicts have not gone away, and the divisions underpinning works such as *The Excavations at Babylon* are now the subject of critiques and calls for archaeology to address, in a variety of ways, the fictive, mythic and narrative aspects of people's engagement with the past.

The central theme throughout this thesis has been the interaction of different ideas, understandings and forms of knowledge. The relationships between Babylon as idea, knowledge and representation were analysed in historical context, culminating in an exploration of these relationships in terms of the interaction of epistemologies in Chapter 8. The relationship of contemporary humanist practice to democracy was examined, and through this the importance of public communication and the opening of academic discourse to external criticism were demonstrated not only in terms of promoting the output of this discourse and its particular merits as a means of understanding the past, but also in terms of strengthening the public understanding and through this the

democratic foundation of the discourse as valid expertise within our society. Implicit within this is a permanent and important relation of interdependence between academic and non-academic knowledge, a characteristic evidenced in the similarity of processes acting on very diverse approaches of Babylon in Chapters 4 and 5. The relationship between different forms of knowledge was shown to be far more than one of interdependence, however. In Chapter 8 the role of hybridity in the history of Babylon as idea and as knowledge was demonstrated and analysed. We have seen many combinations of ideas and knowledge, rarely keeping to the boundaries of epistemological consistency in themselves or in their influence upon one another. In representation we have seen the capacity for myth and theocratic knowledge to act on interpretations produced by empirical research and humanist criticism without subjection to their tests of truth. Understanding this entanglement is all-important if we aim to produce meaningful knowledge of the past.

The Idea of Babylon:

Archaeology and Representation in Mesopotamia

Volume II: Figures, Catalogue and References

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This thesis is submitted for examination for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Figures

Chapter 1

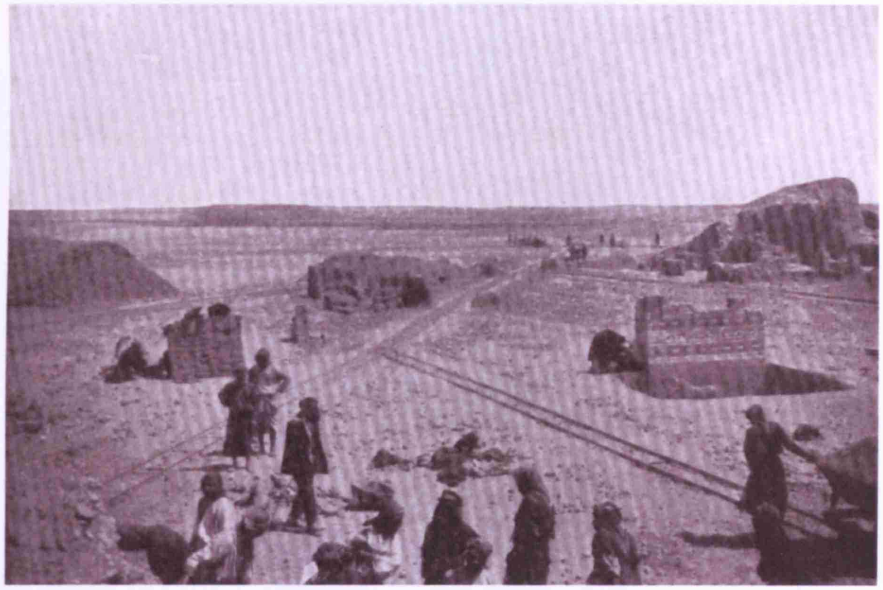

Figure 1.1 The Ishtar Gate during excavation, April 1, 1902 (Koldewey 1914: 40).

Figure 2.1 Allegory of knowledge. Frontispiece to Giambattista Vico, *New Science* (1999 (1744)). Like Descartes, Vico believed the mind to be nearer God and Truth than the material world. His epistemology differed from that of Descartes, however, in that he believed that humanity could only truly know that which it had created, leading him to place history at the centre of science and knowledge.

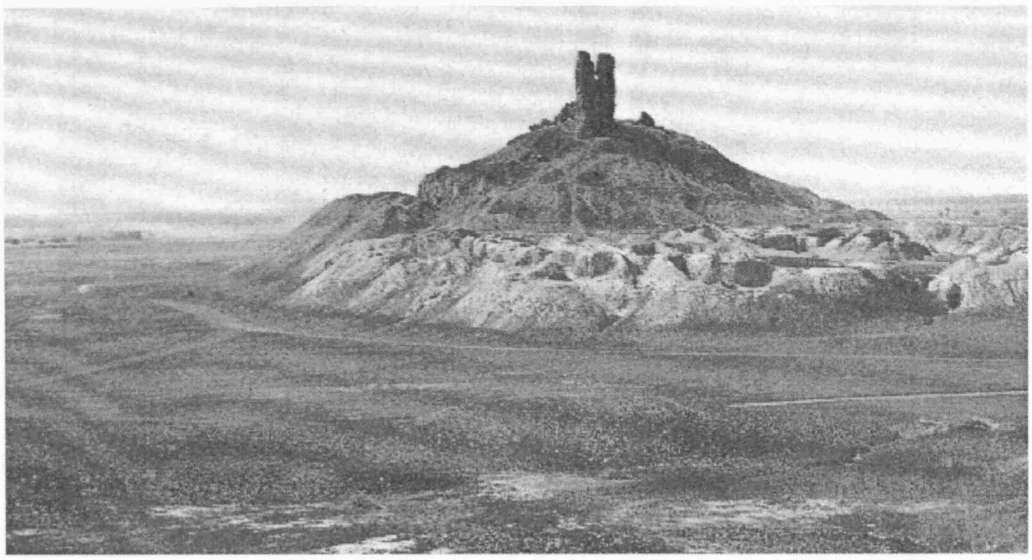

Figure 4.2 Birs Nimrud, ancient Borsippa (Klengel-Brandt 1982: 142). Situated six miles from Babylon, many pre-twentieth century travellers' accounts identify Birs Nimrud as the Tower of Babel.

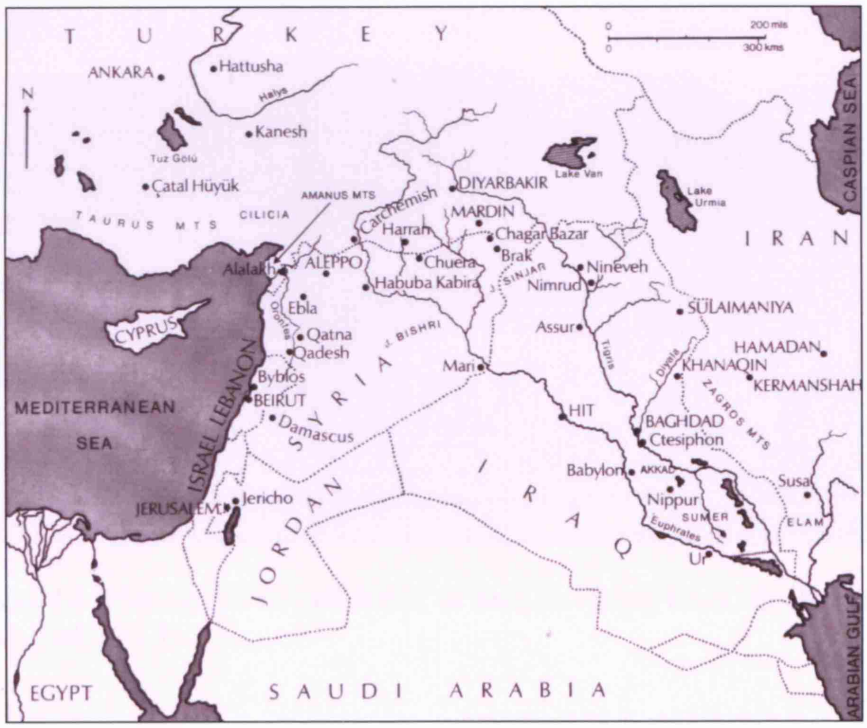

Figure 4.4 Location of Babylon relative to Aleppo and Susa (Oates 1986: 10). Map shows key ancient sites, modern cities (in upper case) and modern state borders.

Figure 4.6 Photograph of Tell Babil, as seen travelling from Hillah to Baghdad (Ravn 1942: Pl. I).

Figure 5.13 William Blake, *Newton*, 1795. Tate Britain, London. This picture was probably intended as a partner to *Nebuchadnezzar*, with the pair forming a meditation on reason and unreason. Blake's interest in this question had a moral dimension: his belief in redemption as the triumph of innocence over experience made him hostile to social constraints of all kinds, believing that they sapped energy and took humanity further from salvation.

Figure 5.14 Lady Layard's Assyrian Jewellery, British Museum, London.

Figure 5.15 The Climax, from Aubrey Beardsley's series of illustrations to Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. Tate Britain, London.

Figure 5.16 Delacroix, *La Mort de Sardanapal*, 1827. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 5.17 Edwin Long, *The Babylonian Marriage Market*, 1875. Royal Holloway College, University of London. Long's use of detail from newly available Assyrian sources was painstaking. His originality in attempting to make the setting as authentic as possible, however, distracts from the conservatism of the theme: the Babylonian marriage market has no basis in Assyrian sources and comes entirely from Herodotus, while its nineteenth-century appeal lay to a large extent in its appropriateness for use in sexualised Orientalist exotica.

Chapter 6

Figure 6.1 Robert Koldewey (Lloyd 1980 (1947): 174).

Figure 6.2 Friedrich Delitzsch at Babylon (Crüsemann 2003: 40).

Figure 6.3 Plan of the excavations at Babylon. Foldout in Koldewey's *Excavations at Babylon* (1914).

Figure 6.4 Expedition house at Babylon, painted by Walter Andrae, 1899 (Andrae and Boehmer 1989). Andrae's landscapes and portraits provide some record of daily life in the area of Babylon at the time of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft excavations. In publication, however, the archaeological was becoming more strictly separated from the contemporary, and the local population do not feature heavily in Koldewey's writing.

Figure 6.5 View of the Ishtar Gate from the north (Koldewey 1914: 33). For a brief period in the early twentieth century Koldewey's work left many of Babylon's streets and buildings visible for the first time since antiquity. Once exposed, however, the mud-brick architecture was highly vulnerable to erosion.

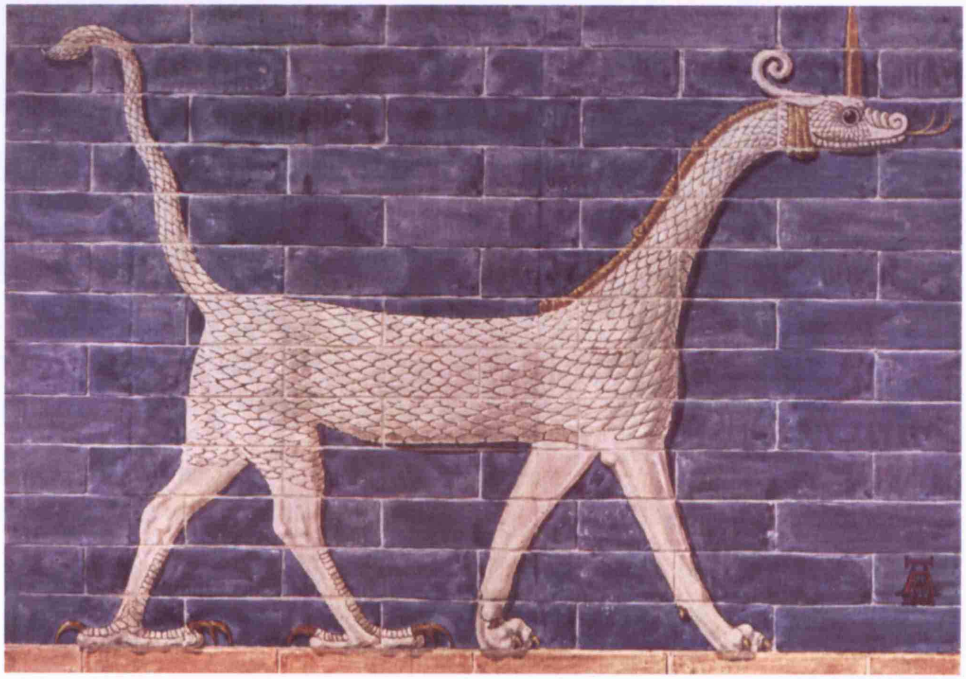

Figure 6.6 *Sirrush* dragon from the Ishtar Gate, painted by Walter Andrae (Koldewey 1914: Plate facing page 47).

Figure 6.7 The 'Layard Box,' with which Austen Henry Layard was presented with the Freedom of the City of London in 1854 (*Illustrated London News* 1854).

Figure 6.8 Desalinating glazed brick fragments from Babylon for use in the Vorderasiatisches Abteilung reconstructions (Von Eickstedt 2000: 26).

Figure 6.9 Andrae's plan for the reconstructed Ishtar Gate, 1927 (Andrae and Boehmer 1989). Cf. Fig. 1.2.

Figure 6.10 Scale model of the Ishtar Gate in its original context. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

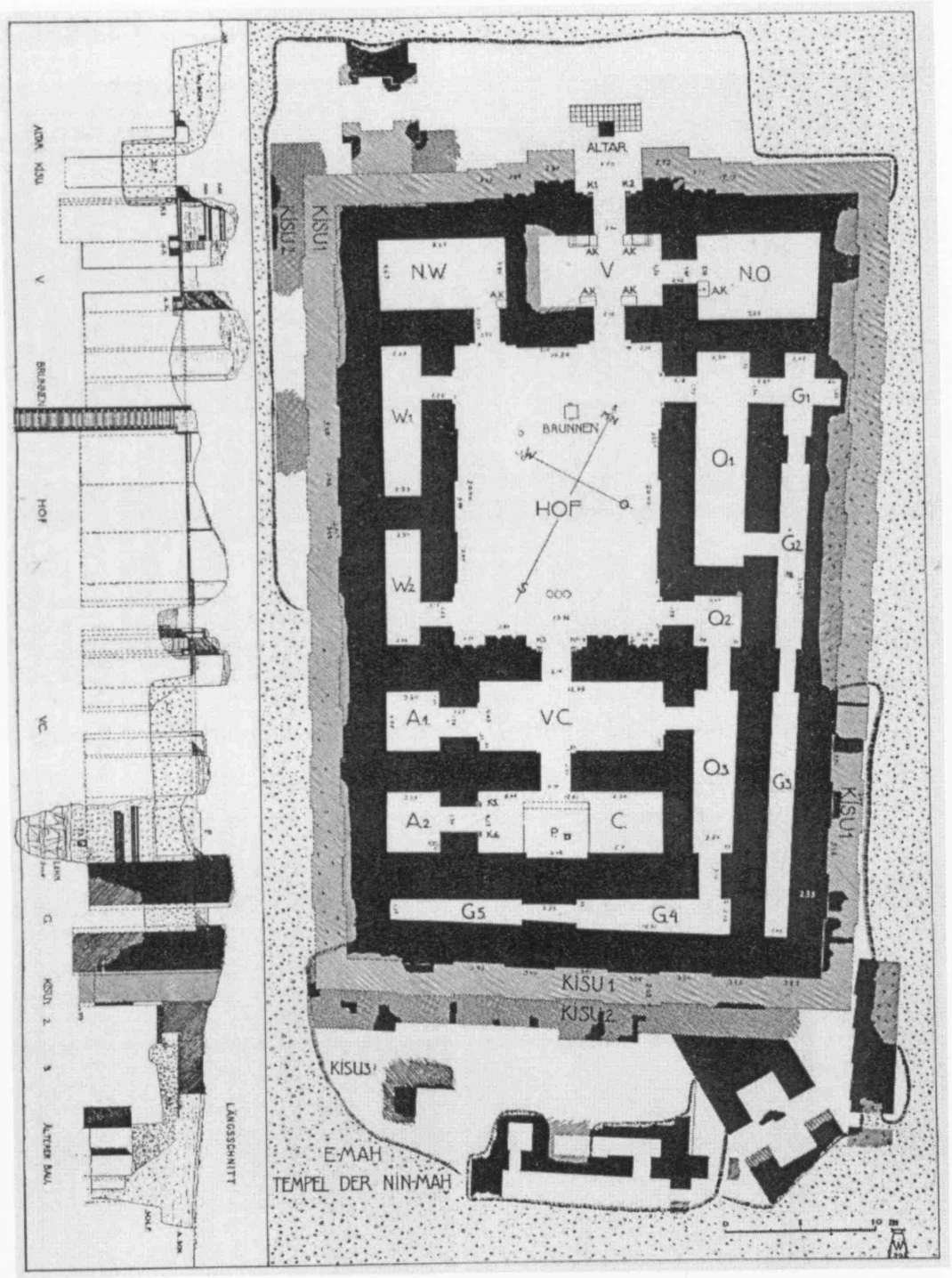

Figure 6.11 Plan and section of the Ninmach Temple by Walter Andrae (Koldewey 1914: 56). Both Koldewey and Andrae brought the benefits of architectural training to their recording of Babylon's buildings. The Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft excavations at Babylon and Ashur represent important developments in the recording of ancient Mesopotamian architecture.

Figure 7.1 The Babylon set from D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916).

Figure 7.2 The siege of Babylon, from D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916).

Figure 7.3 M. C. Escher, *Tower of Babel*, 1928.

Figure 7.4 The new Tower of Babel. Concept art for Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The Genesis narrative took on new meanings in twentieth-century contexts, as concerns with identity and alienation came together with the older narrative of pride and greed leading to destruction.

Figure 7.5 Anne Desmet, *Tower of Babble*, 1999. Private collection. The Genesis theme of the Confusion of Tongues has also gained new resonance with late modernity's processes of internationalisation and globalisation. The Tower can stand for modern confusion, alienation and failure to communicate.

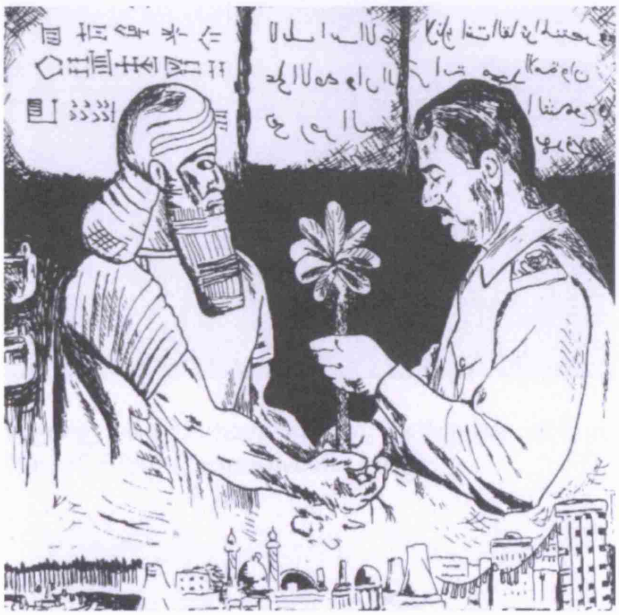

Figure 7.6 The Mesopotamian inheritance passing to Saddam Hussein. Anonymous artist. *Alif Ba*, January 1986 (Baram 1991: 116).

Figure 7.7 Saddam Hussein's 'Victory Arches,' Baghdad. Completed 1989 (Global Security 2005).

Figure 7.8 Damage caused by looting at Isin. Photograph John Malcolm Russell (Four Corners Media 2005).

Figure 7.9 'City of Tents' area of Polish military Camp Alpha at Babylon (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Poland 2004). The City of Tents with all living facilities was situated immediately beside the Southern Palace. The presence of a military camp prevented looting in the immediate aftermath of the 2003 war, but caused enormous damage to the site in its own right (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Poland 2004; Curtis 2005).

Appendix A: Sources on Babylon

Although it cannot be exhaustive, this catalogue includes all the most influential sources on Babylon and, to the best of the author's knowledge, all those that introduce significant new elements into Babylon's representation. It includes all the primary sources referred to in the present thesis, as well as others consulted in its production. Source numbers are given in superscript next to their first mention in the thesis text, e.g. "Genesis[1]."

All sources are presented according to the following format:

Catalogue no. Author

Title of work

Type of work, date

Additional notes

Chapter of this thesis to which the source is most relevant

Image (if applicable)

Sources are presented in chronological order by century. Since many sources are of uncertain date the following order is used within centuries: 1. Non-specific (e.g. "16th century"); 2. Early/Mid/Late (e.g. "Mid-seventeenth century"); 3. Ranges and certain dates (e.g. "1620-1640," "1653"); 4. Turn-of-century (e.g. "late-seventeenth/early eighteenth century," "1690-1705").

Every effort has been made to provide complete information and, where applicable, copies of images for all sources. Due to difficulties of access and permission restrictions, however, this has not been possible in every case. Where copyright-holders have watermarked images no attempt has been made to tamper with the mark. In a small number of cases (textual sources where no "version" is listed), only secondary sources have been used.

Note on Old Testament chronology: Wherever possible, this catalogue follows the information on dates of composition given by Barrera (1998). In all cases dates are given for probable date of composition, but in simplifying they must inevitably misrepresent the complex and uncertain histories of these texts.

Note on twentieth- and twenty-first century sources: For the most recent periods, selection of sources on the basis of later influence becomes impossible. There is also a massive increase in production of media of all kinds, with a proportional increase in the number of representations of Babylon. In theory the entire corpus of modern archaeological and Assyriological writing on Babylon could be included in this part of the catalogue, but to do this is impractical and unhelpful to readers familiar with the disciplines of Mesopotamian archaeology and Assyriology. A similar problem occurs in the use of Babylon as a cipher in Rastafarian culture. Three sources, representing traditional music, popular music and film, must serve to represent an entire movement suffused with the name of Babylon. Finally, modern art on the themes of Babylon and Babel is represented by a small selection intended to represent the diversity of this very large body of works, the long-term significance of which is as yet unknown.

1. ***Genesis***

Hebrew Torah/Pentateuch/Old Testament source. Text J (Yahwist source) c.970-930 BCE; text E (Elohist source) c.930-720 BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

2. ***2 Kings***

Hebrew Deuteronomistic history/Old Testament source, 6th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

3. ***Psalms***

Hebrew prayer/Old Testament source, 6th-2nd century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

4. ***Verse Account of Nabonidus***

Babylonian priestly source, after 539 BCE

British Museum ANE 35382

Version: Pritchard 1969

Chapter 3

5. ***Cyrus Cylinder***

Babylonian foundation inscription, after 539 BCE

British Museum ANE 90920

Version: Pritchard 1969

Chapter 3

6. ***Isaiah***

Hebrew Prophecy/Old Testament source, 5th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

7. ***Jeremiah***

Hebrew prophecy/Old Testament source, 5th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

8. ***2 Chronicles***

Hebrew history/Old Testament source, 5th or 4th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

9. ***Ezra***

Hebrew history/Old Testament source, 5th or 4th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

10. Herodotus

Histories

History, mid-5th century BCE

Version: Marincola / De Sélincourt 2003

Chapter 3

11. *Baruch*

Hebrew prophecy/Apocryphal source, 4th century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

12. Aetion

Semiramis Rising from Slavery to Royal Power

Painting, 4th century BCE

Lost. Cited in Pliny (*Natural History* XXXV)

Chapter 3

13. Ctesias of Cnidus

Persica

Greek history, 4th century BCE

Lost. Cited in Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheke historica* II)

Chapter 3

14. Xenophon of Athens

Cyropaedia/Education of Cyrus

Fictional biography, 4th century BCE

Version: Miller 1914

Chapter 3

15. Athenaeus

Greek history, 4th century BCE

Lost. Cited in Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheke Historica* II)

Chapter 3

16. Megasthenes

Indica

Greek history, reign of Seleucus Nicator (312-280 BCE)

Lost. Cited in Eusebius of Caesarea (*Chronicon* XLIX, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX) (via Abydenus (*De Assyriis / Historia Chaldeorum*)) and Flavius Jospehus (*Jewish Antiquities* X)

Chapter 3

17. Berossus

Babyloniaca / Chaldaica

Greek history, early 3rd century BCE

Lost. Cited in Flavius Josephus (probably via Alexander Polyhistor) (*Contra Appionem* I) and Eusebius of Caesarea (*Chronicon* (references to Berossus known through the Armenian translation (500-800 CE) and Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* (c.800 CE)), *Praeparario Evangelica* IX (the latter via Josephus))

Chapter 3

18. *Daniel*

Hebrew/Aramaic history/prophecy/apocalypse/Old Testament source, 2nd century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

19. *Bel and the Dragon (Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, Daniel, Bel and the Dragon)*

Hebrew/Aramaic history/wisdom literature/Apocryphal source, 2nd century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

20. *1 Esdras*

Hebrew/Aramaic history/Apocryphal source, 2nd century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

21. *Esther*

Hebrew historical/wisdom literature/Old Testament source, 2nd

Century BCE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

22. Eupolemus

On the Kings of Judea

Greek history, 2nd century BCE

Lost. Cited in Eusebius of Caesarea (*Praeparatio Evangelica*

IX), via Alexander Polyhistor (*On the Jews*)

Chapter 3

23. Antipater of Sidon

Greek poem listing the seven wonders of the world, 2nd century

BCE

Chapter 3

24. Alexander Polyhistor

On the Jews

Greek History, 1st century BCE

Lost. Cited in Eusebius of Caesarea (*Praeparatio Evangelica* IX)

and Flavius Josephus (*Contra Apionem* I)

Chapter 3

25. Diodorus Siculus

Bibliotheke Historica

Greek history, 1st century BCE

Version: Murphy 1989

Chapter 3

26. Flavius Josephus

Contra Appionem

Greek history / apologia, 1st century CE

Version: Thackeray 1926

Chapter 3

27. Flavius Josephus

De Antiquitate Jaudaicae

Greek history, 1st century CE

Version: Thackeray et al. 1930-1965

Chapter 3

28. *The Ninus Romance*

Greek novel, 1st century CE

Fragmentary.

Version: Stephens and Winkler 1995

Chapter 3

29. Quintus Curtius Rufus

Historiae Alexandri Magni

Latin history, 1st century CE

Version: Rolfe 1946

Chapter 3

30. Soterichos

The Experiences of Panthea, the Babylonian Girl

Greek novel, 1st century CE

Version: Omar 1979

Chapter 3

31. Hyginus

Fabulae

Latin mythology, early 1st century CE

Version: Waiblinger 1996

Chapter 3

32. Strabo

Grography

Greek geography, early 1st century CE

Version: Jones 1917-1932

Chapter 3

33. Ovid

Metamorphoses

Latin epic poem, c.8 CE

Version: Martin 2005

Chapter 3

34. Pliny the Elder

Naturalis Historia

Latin encyclopedia, 77 CE

Version: Rackham 1950

Chapter 3

35. *Revelation*

Greek Apocalypse/New Testament source, completed 81-96 CE

Version: Suggs et al. 1992

Chapter 3

36. Plutarch

Erotikos (*Moralia* 748-770)

Greek essay, 1st-2nd century CE

Version: Minar, Sandbach and Helmbold 1961

Chapter 3

37. Arrian of Nicomedia

Campaigns of Alexander

Greek history, 2nd century CE

Version: De Sélincourt 1958

Chapter 3

38. Iamblichos

Babylioniaca

Greek novel, 2nd century CE

Fragmentary, cited in Photius (*Bibliotheke* XCIV)

Version: Stephens and Winkler 1995

Chapter 3

39. Lucian of Samosata

The True History

Greek satire, 2nd century CE

Version: Harmon 1913

Chapter 3

40. Claudius Ptolemy

Canon of Kings

Greek chronology (preserving Babylonian), 2nd century CE

Chapter 3

41. Athenagoras of Athens

Embassy for the Christians

Latin history / apologia, 177 CE

Version: Pratten 1867

Chapter 3

42. Abydenus

History of the Assyrians and Medes

Greek history, 2nd or 3rd century CE

Lost. Cited in Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* IX, *Chronicon* V, XIII, XLIX) and Georgius Syncellus (*Ecloga Chronographica* XXXVIII, XLIV)

Chapter 3

43. *Burning Fiery Furnace*

Fresco, Catacombs of Priscilla, Rome

Late 3rd century CE

Chapter 5

44. Athenaeus of Naucratis

Deipnosophistae

Greek miscellany, early 3rd century CE

Version: Gulick 1927-1941

Chapter 3

45. Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea

Chronicon

Greek history, completed after 311 CE

Fragmentary. Armenian, Syrian and Latin (Jerome) versions survive

Chapter 3

46. Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea

Praeparatio Evangelica

Greek history, written c.313-324 CE

Version: Gifford 1903

Chapter 3

47. St Jerome (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus)

Chronicon

Latin translation of chronological tables from the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, c.380 CE

Chapter 5

48. Philo the Paradoxographer of Byzantium

***On the Seven Wonders of the World*, 4th century CE**

Chapter 3

49. St Jerome (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus)

Commentaries on Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah

Latin biblical commentaries, early 5th century CE

Chapter 5

50. Orosius

Historiae Adversus Paganos

Latin history, early 5th century CE

Version: Arnauld-Lindet 1990

Chapter 5

51. St Augustine of Hippo

De Civitate Dei

Latin theology c.413-426 CE

Version: McCracken et al. 1957-1972

Chapter 5

52. ***Al-Baqarah***

Arabic Quranic Sura, 7th century CE

Version: Dawood 1990 (1956)

Chapter 5

53. **Photius**

Bibliotheke

Latin epitomes and notes, late 9th century CE

Version: Freese 1920

Chapter 3

54. ***Fall of Babylon*; *Burning of Babylon*; *Sarcophagi of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego*** **and** ***Scarlet Woman on Beast***

Manuscript illustrations, Spain, 10th century CE

In Beatus of Liébana, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.644

Chapter 5

55. Ibn Hauqal

Kitab Surat al-Ard

Arabic geography, 10th century CE

Version: Kramers and Wiet 1965

Chapter 4

56. Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Biruni

Al-Athar al-Bakiya 'an-il-Kurun al-Khaliya

Arabic history, c.1000 CE

Version: Sachau 1879

Chapter 5

57. ***Tower of Babel***

Sculpture, Italy, 11th century

Sculpture on Antependium, Cathedral of Salerno

Chapter 5

58. ***Babilonica Deserta***

Sculpture, France, 11th century

Column capital, chancel, Church of St Pierre, Chauvigny

Chapter 5

59. ***Tower of Babel***

Manuscript illustration, second quarter of 11th century

In Aelfric, *Illustrated Hexateuch*. British Library, London, MS Cotton Claudius B.IV

Chapter 5

60. **Petrus, Prior of the monastery of San Domingo de Silos**

Burning Fiery Furnace; Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Tree

Manuscript illustration, Spain c.1100

In *Silos Apocalypse*. British Library, London, Add. MS 11695

Chapter 5

61. ***Tower of Babel***

Fresco, France, early 12th century

Nave vault, abbey church of St Savin-sur-Gartempe, France

Chapter 5

62. ***Daniel: The Dreams of Nebuchadnezzar***

Manuscript illustration, England, 12th century

In *Lambeth Bible*. Lambeth Palace, London, MS 3

Chapter 5

63. ***Les Enfants dans la Fournaise***

Manuscript illustration, France, 12th century

In *Bible of Etienne Harding*. Bibliothèque Municipale, Dijon.

Chapter 5

64. **Benjamin ben Jonah of Tudela**

Itinerary

Hebrew travel account, Spain, late 12th century

Version: Signer 1983

Chapter 4

65. Ibn Daud

Sefer ha-Qabbalah

Hebrew History, Spain, 1160-61

Version: Cohen 1967

Chapter 5

66. *Tower of Babel*

Mosaic (1182, pictured) and column capitol (c.1200)

Monreale Cathedral, Sicily

Chapter 5

67. *Tower of Babel*

Mosaic, Venice, 13th century

Basilica San Marco, Venice

Chapter 5

68. French School

The Destruction of Babylon

Manuscript illustration, France, 13th century

In *Cambrai Apocalypse*, Bibliotheque Municipale, Cambrai,

France, MS 422

Chapter 5

69. Giovanni Cimabue

Tower of Babel

Fresco, Italy, mid-late 13th century

Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi

Chapter 7

70. *Tower of Babel*

Manuscript illustration, France, c.1244-1254

In *Crusader Bible*. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.638

Chapter 5

71. English School

An Angel Leading St John the Evangelist to the Whore of Babylon

Manuscript illustration, c.1265-1270

In *Gulbenkian Apocalypse*. Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, MS LA 139

Chapter 5

72. Dante Alighieri

Commedia: Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso

Italian epic poem, early 14th century

Version: Dale 1996

Chapter 5

73. Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, France, 14th century

In Guiyart des Moulins, *Bible Historiale*. Bibliotheque Municipale, Troyes, France, MS 59

Chapter 5

74. St Odoric (Friar Odoric of Pordenone)

Relation of the Travels of Friar Odoric

Latin travel account, 14th century

Version: Chiesa / Yule 2002 (1866)

Chapter 4

75. *Tower of Babel (top left; Nimrod and Abraham (bottom right)*

Manuscript illustrations, Catalonia, c.1320

In *Golden Haggadah*. British Library, London, MS Add. 27210

Chapter 5

76. ***Tower of Babel***

Manuscript illustration, Italy, 1330-1350

In *Bible of Clement VII*. British Library, London, MS Add. 47672

Chapter 5

77. Michiel van der Borch

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Utrecht, 1332

In Jacob van Maerlant, *Rhimebible*. The Hague, MS MMW 10 B 21

Chapter 5

78. Bohemian Master

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Bohemia, c.1340

In *Velislav Bible*. University Library, Prague, MS 23 C 124

Chapter 5

79. *Travels of Sir John de Mandeville*

French travel account, 1350-1371

Version: Moseley 1983

Chapter 4

80. *Tower of Babel*

Manuscript illustration, England, c.1360

In *Egerton Genesis Picture Book*. British Library, London, MS Egerton 1894

Chapter 5

81. Giusto de Menabuoi

Tower of Babel

Fresco, Italy, 1360-1370

Baptistry, Padua

Chapter 5

82. Imitator of Rudolf von Ems

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Bavaria, c.1375-1380

Christ-Herre Chronik. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.769

Chapter 5

83. Nicholas Bataille

The Apocalypse of Angers

Tapestry, France, 1373-1387

Musée des Tappisseries, Angers, France

Chapter 5

84. Flemish School

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Utrecht, 1430

In *History Bible*. The Hague, MS KS 78 D 38 I, II

Chapter 5

85. French School

Nimrod Overseeing the Building of the Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, France, 15th century

In French translation of St Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*.

Bibliotheque Municipale, Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, MS 55

Chapter 5

86. French School

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, France, 15th century

In *Le Tresor des Histoires*. British Library, London, MS Cotton Augustus V

Chapter 5

87. Master of Jacques d'Armagnac

Nimrod of Babylon and the Building of the Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, France, 15th century

In Jean de Courcy, *La Bouquechardière*. The Hague. MS MMW 10 A 17

88. French School

Nimrod of Babylon and the Building of the Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, France, 15th century

In Jean de Courcy, *La Bouquechardière*. Musée Condé,

Chantilly, France, MS 728

Chapter 5

89. Flemish School

Nebuchadnezzar and the Dream of the Tree

Manuscript illustration, Flemish, 15th century

In Lambert de St Omer, *Liber Floridus*. Musée Condé, Château

de Chantilly, France. MS 724

Chapter 5

90. Flemish School

Belshazzar's Vision Explained by Daniel

Manuscript illustration, Flemish, 15th century

In *Miroir de l'Humaine Salvation*. Musée Condé, Château de Chantilly, France, MS 139

Chapter 5

91. Augsburg School

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego

Oil on panel, Germany, 15th century

Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania

Chapter 5

92. Giosaphat Barbaro

Viaggio della Tana e nella Persia

Italian Travel account, late 15th century

Version: 1973

Chapter 4

93. *Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem*

Manuscript illustration, England, c.1405-1415

In letter 'A' beginning the Book of Daniel, *Great Bible* (Vulgate). British Library MS Royal 1E.IX

Chapter 5

94. Giacomo Jaqueirio

Semiramis in *The Nine Worthies and the Nine Worthy Women*

Fresco, Italy, 1418-1430

Castello della Manta, Saluzzo, Italy

Chapter 5

95. ***Tower of Babel***

Manuscript illustration, Florence, c.1425

In Pseudo-Aristotle, *Secreta Secretorum*. British Library,

London, MS Yates Thompson 28

Chapter 5

96. **Master of the Munich Golden Legends**

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Paris, 1424-1430

In *Bedford Hours*. British Library, London, MS Add. 18850

Chapter 5

97. Giovanni di Paolo

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Manuscript illustration, Tuscany, c.1450

In Dante, *Commedia*. British Library, London, MS Yates Thompson 36

Chapter 5

98. ***Tower of Babel***

Manuscript illustration, northern France, c.1460-1465

In Jean de Courcy, *Bouquechardière manuscript*,

Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, MS Inv. Min.

632

Chapter 5

99. ***Tower of Babel***

Manuscript illustration, Bruges, c.1470

In Jean de Courcy, *Chronique Universelle*. Pierpont Morgan

Library, New York, MS M.224

Chapter 5

100. **Jean Fouquet**

Nebuchadnezzar Besieging Jerusalem

Manuscript illustration, France, 1470-1476

In French translation of Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*,

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS fr.247

Chapter 5

101. Johann Schiltberger

The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger

German travel account, 1473

Version: Telfer 1879

Chapter 4

102. *Nimrod Supervises the Building of the Tower of Babel*

Manuscript illustration, Netherlands, c.1475

In Giovanni Boccaccio (trans. Laurent de Premierfait) *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes*. British Library, London, MS Add. 35321

Chapter 5

103. Gerard Horembout

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Bruges or Ghent, 1496-1506

In *Hours of Joana 'the Mad' of Castile*. British Library, London,

MS Add. 18852

Chapter 5

104. Master of Marradi

Nebuchadnezzar Questions Daniel and His Companions

Tempera on panel, Florence, 1480-1500

Alberto Bruschi di Grassina Collection, Florence

Chapter 5

105. Albrecht Durer

The Woman of Babylon or the Revelation of St John the Divine

Woodcut, Germany, 1498

Private collection

Chapter 5

106. Jan Van Scorel

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Flemish, 16th century

Ca' d'Oro, Venice

Chapter 5

107. Maerten van Heemskerck

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, 16th century

Private collection (sold at Christie's 23.03.1990)

Chapter 5

108. Lucas van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, 16th century

Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Bayern

Chapter 5

109. Maerten van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, 16th century

Towneley Hall Art Gallery, Burnley, UK

Chapter 5

110. Etienne Delaune

Extruitur Turris Babilonica

Copper engraving, France, 16th century

In unfinished series, *Figures from Genesis*.

Chapter 5

111. Hendrick van Cleve

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, mid-16th century

Phillips Fine Art Auctioneers, Oxford

Chapter 5

112. Hendrick van Cleve

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, mid-16th century

Kunsthalle, Hamburg

Chapter 5

113. Hendrick van Cleve

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, mid-16th century

Galerie de Jonckheere, Paris

Chapter 5

114. Maerten van Heemskerck

Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Hand-coloured copper engraving, Netherlands, late 16th century

Chapter 5

115. Maerten van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, late 16th century

Schloß Gaesbeck, Brabant

Chapter 5

116. Maerten van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, late 16th century

Chapter 5

117. Hendrick van Cleve and Louis de Caullery

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, late 16th century

Chapter 5

118. Hendrick van Cleve

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, late 16th century

Rÿksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands

Chapter 5

119. Flemish Master

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Flemish, 1508-1519

In *Brevarium Grimani*. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. MS Lat I, 99

Chapter 5

120. *Babylon Burning*

Manuscript illustration, Germany, c.1530

In *Luther Bible*. Private collection.

Chapter 5

121. Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti)

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on canvas, Italy, c.1544

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Chapter 5

122. Giorgio Giulio Clovio (Juraj Julije Klović)

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration, Italy, 1546

In *Farnese Hours*. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.69

Chapter 5

123. Cornelius Anthonisz

Tower of Babel

Copper engraving, Amsterdam, 1547

Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, MS Inv. 461-22

Chapter 5

124. Bernard Salomon

Tower of Babel

Manuscript illustration (woodcut), France, 1554

In *Bible Illustrée*, Lyon.

Chapter 5

125. Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, c.1563

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, GG 1026

Chapter 5

126. Pieter Bruegel the Elder

The 'Little' Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, c.1563

Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Chapter 5

127. Hendrick van Cleve

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, c.1563

J.A. Berg Collection, Stockholm University

Chapter 5

128. Lucas van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, 1568

Galerie de Jonckheere, Paris

Chapter 5

129. Phillip Galle (after Maerten van Heemskerck)

Tower of Babel

Copper engraving, Netherlands, 1569

In series *Claves Judae Gentis.*

Chapter 5

130. Phillip Galle (after Maerten van Heemskerck)

Wall of Babylon

Copper engraving, Netherlands, 1572

In series *Octo Mundi Miraculi.* Achenbach Foundation for

Graphic Arts, San Francisco, 1963.30.12327

Chapter 5

131. Tobias Stimmer

Tower of Babel

Woodcut, Strasbourg, 1576

In Johann Fischart, *Biblischer Historien*, Basel.

Chapter 5

132. Leonhard Rauwolff

Aigentliche beschreibung der Raiß

German travel account, 1583

Version: 1583

Chapter 4

133. Lucas van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Frankfurt, 1594

Musée du Louvre, Paris, RF 2427

Chapter 5

134. Lucas van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Frankfurt, 1595

Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Mainz

Chapter 5

135. Lucas van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Frankfurt, 1595

Mittelrhein-Museum, Koblenz

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136. Maerten van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, 1595

Gemäldgalerie, Dresden

Chapter 5

137. German School

'Flügellade der Nürnberger Steinmetze'

Oil painting, Germany, 1587

Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

Chapter 5

138. Moscow School

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace

Icon, Russia, c.1600

Mark Gallery, London

Chapter 5

139. Attributed to Louis de Caullery

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, France, c.1600

Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Kassel, Germany

Chapter 5

140. John Eldred

John Eldred's Narrative

English travel account, c.1600

Version: 1903

Chapter 4

141. Joos de Momper, figures attributed to Frans Francken

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, c.1600

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels

Chapter 5

142. Follower of Jan Harmensz Mutter

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on panel, Netherlands, c.1600

Bonham's, London

Chapter 5

143. Hans Schlottheim

Tower of Babel

Ornamental clock, Augsburg, c.1600

Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden

Chapter 5

144. Leandro Bassano

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Italy, after 1600

National Gallery, London, NG60

Chapter 5

145. Paul Bril

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, late 16th/early 17th century

Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Bayern

Chapter 5

146. Munejjimbashi (Ahmed ibn Lutfullah)

Arabic universal history, 17th century

Unpublished. Cited in Lewis 1982 :158

Chapter 5

147. Maerten van Valckenborch

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, late 16th/early 17th century

Private collection (sold at Sotheby's, London, January 2004)

Chapter 5

148. Flemish School

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on panel, Netherlands, 17th century

Musée des beaux-arts, Nantes, France

Chapter 5

149. 'Master Allen'

Travels

English travel account, early 17th century

Chapter 4

150. Giovanni Francesco Barbieri ('Il Guercino')

Semiramis Called to Arms

Oil on canvas, Italy, early 17th century

Private collection (sold at Sotheby's, London, July 2005)

Chapter 5

Jan Brueghel the Elder

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, early 17th century

Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, Italy

Chapter 5

151. John Cartwright

Itinerario Ionnis Cartwright

Latin travel account, early 17th century

Version: De Laet 1633

Chapter 4

152. Emmanuel de St Albert

French travel account, early 17th century

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153. Frans Francken II

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, early 17th century

Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo

Chapter 5

154. Frans Francken II

Tower of Babel

Copper engraving, Netherlands, early 17th century

Museo Real Academia des Bellas Artes, Madrid

Chapter 5

155. François Nomé and Desiderio Barra

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Naples, early 17th century

Naples, private collection

Chapter 5

156. Salomon Koninck

Daniel Before Nebuchadnezzar

Oil on canvas, Netherlands, mid-17th century

Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, UK

Chapter 5

157. Erasmus Quellinus

Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream

Oil on panel, mid-17th century

Private collection

Chapter 5

158. Vincenzo Maria di St Caterina di Sienna

Viaggi

Italian travel account, Netherlands, mid-late 17th century

Chapter 4

159. Mattia Preti (Il Calabrese)

Daniel Interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream

Oil on canvas, Italy, mid-late 17th century

Chapter 5

160. Jacob van der Ulft

Tower of Babel

Gouache on vellum, Netherlands, mid-late 17th century

Sotheby's, London

Chapter 5

161. Roelandt Savery

Tower of Babel

Oil on panel, Netherlands, 1602

Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

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162. Abel Grimmer

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, 1605

Private collection

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163. Attributed to Abel Grimmer

Tower of Babel

Oil painting, Netherlands, c.1605

Galerie de Jonckheere, Paris

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164. Anthony Sherley

Travels

English travel account, 1613

Version: Manwaring 1825

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165. Giovanni Francesco Barbieri ('Il Guercino')

Semiramis Receives Word of the Revolt of Babylon

Oil on canvas, Italy, 1624

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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166. Matthäus Merian the Elder

Tower of Babel

Engraving, Frankfurt, 1625-1630

In series *Icones Biblicae*, Frankfurt.

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167. Matthäus Merian the Elder

Belshazzar's Feast

Engraving, Frankfurt, 1625-1630

In series *Icones Biblicae*, Frankfurt.

Chapter 5

168. Guebels Workshop (after Maerten de Vos and Maerten van Heemskerck)

Walls of Babylon

Tapestry, Brussels, 1629-1650

In series *The Wonders of the World*. Bernard Blondeel Tapisseries Anciennes, Antwerp

Chapter 5

169. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on canvas, Amsterdam, c.1635

National Gallery, London

Chapter 5

171. Gabriel Gilbert

Sémiramis, Tragédie

French play, 1647

Version: 1847

Chapter 5

172. Desfontaines

La Véritable Sémiramis, Tragédie

French play, 1647

Version: 1647

Chapter 5

173. Juan Carreno de Miranda

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on canvas, Spain, 1650-1670

Bowes Museum, County Durham, UK

Chapter 5

174. Pietro della Valle

Viaggi di Pietro della Valle

Italian letters, published 1650-1663

Version: Kircher 1679

Chapter 4

175. Artist travelling with Pietro della Valle

Ruins of the Tower of Babel

Drawings of Tell Babil, 1616

Version: Kircher 1679

Chapter 4

176. Thomas Browne

The Gardens of Cyrus or The Quincunciall, Lozenge, or Net-work Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered

English discussion of ancient gardens and plantations, 1658

Version: 1927

Chapter 5

177. Charles Le Brun

The Entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon* or *The Triumph of Alexander

Oil on canvas, France, 1665

Musée du Louvre, Paris

Chapter 5

178. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier

Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier en Turquie, en Perse, et aux Indes, Pendant l'Espace de Quarante Ans

French travel account, 1676-1677

Version: 1676-1677

Chapter 4

179. Athanasius Kircher

Turris Babel

Latin discussion of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues, with engravings by Conraet Decker / Decker after Lievin Cruyl, Amsterdam, 1679

Version: 1679

Chapter 5

180. Olfert Dapper

Description of Asia

Dutch history and travel account, 1680

Version: Beern 1681

Chapter 4

181. Johann Ulrich Klaus

Semiramis

Engraving, Germany, 1690

In *Ovid: Metamorphoses*.

Chapter 5

182. Gobelins Workshop (after Charles Le Brun)

The Entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon

French tapestry, 18th century

Bedroom of Louis XIV, Château de Versailles, France

Chapter 5

183. *Tower of Babel*

Manuscript illustration, North Africa, 18th century

In *Tabiba Tabiban, an Ethiopic Hymnary*. British Library, London, MS Or. 590

Chapter 5

184. Gasparo Diziani

The Entrance of Alexander the Great into Babylon

Oil on canvas, Venice, 18th century

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France

Chapter 5

185. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Semiramis

Melodrama, Frankfurt or Mannheim, late 18th century

Unfinished and lost

Chapter 5

186. Prosper Jolyon de Crebillon

Sémiramis, Tragédie

French play, 1717

Version: 1718

Chapter 5

187. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach

Spectacula Babylonica

Engraving, Germany, 1721

In *Entwürff einer historischen Architectur*. Version: Kunoth 1956

Chapter 5

188. Johann Andreas Pfeffel

Scenographica Turris / Orthographica Turris: Views of the Tower of Babel

Copper engravings, Amsterdam, c.1730

In J.J. Scheuchzer: *Sacred Physics*. Version: Müsch 2000

Chapter 5

189. Handel, George Friedrich (libretto by Charles Jennens)

Belshazzar, an Oratorio

English Oratorio, London, first performed 1745

Version: Jennens 1745

Chapter 5

190. Voltaire

Zadig, ou La Destinée

French novel, 1747

Version: 1749

Chapter 5

191. Jean Otter

Voyage en Turquie et en Perse

French travel account, 1748

Version: 1748

Chapter 4

192. Voltaire

Sémiramis, Tragédie

French play, first performed 1748

Version: 1814

Chapter 5

193. Francesco Fontebasso

The Entrance of Alexander the Great into Babylon

Oil on canvas, Italy, 1762

Musee des Pays de l'Ain, Bourg-en-Bresse, France

Chapter 5

194. Voltaire

La Princesse de Babylone

French novel, 1768

Version: 1768

Chapter 5

195. Edward Ives

A Voyage from England to India, in the Year 1754, and an Historical Narrative of the Operations of the Squadron and Army in India... Also a journey from Persia to England by an Unusual Route

English travel account, 1773

Version: 1773

Chapter 4

196. Carsten Niebuhr

Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern

German travel and antiquarian account, 1774

Version: 1778

Chapter 4

197. G. Antoine Olivier

Voyage dans l'Empire Othoman, L'Égypte et la Perse

French travel and antiquarian account, 1789-1790

Version: 1789-1790, 1801

Chapter 4

198. William Blake

Nebuchadnezzar

Manuscript illustration, London, 1790-1793

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Version: 1979

Chapter 5

199. William Blake

Nebuchadnezzar

Copper engraving print with watercolour and ink, London, 1795

Tate Britain, London

Chapter 5

200. Joseph de Beauchamp

Itinéraire du Voyage fait par le Citoyen Beauchamp / Mémoire sur la Carte de la Mésopotamie

French travel account and map, 1790-1800

Version: copy of map and handwritten copy of extracts, British Library, London

Chapter 4

201. *How Many Miles to Babylon?*

English nursery rhyme, existing by 19th century

Chapter 5

202. Ludwig van Beethoven

Ruinen von Babylon

German music, early 19th century

Unfinished

Chapter 5

203. *Jeremiah, on the Ruins of the Sanctuary, Watches the Deportation of the Jews to Babylon by the King Nebuchadnezzar*

Eglomise glass, Austria-Hungary, 19th century

Judaica Collection, Max Berger, Vienna

Chapter 5

204. James Jacques Joseph Tissot and followers

Tower of Babel

Gouache on board, France, late 19th century

Jewish Museum, New York

Chapter 5

205. William Blake

A Vision of the Last Judgement

Pen and watercolour, London, 1806

Stirling Maxwell Collection, Pollock House, Glasgow Museums, UK

Chapter 5

206. William Blake

A Vision of the Last Judgement

Pen and watercolour, London, 1808

Egremont Collection, Petworth House, Sussex, UK

Chapter 5

207. William Blake

A Vision of the Last Judgement

Pen and watercolour, London, 1809

Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Chapter 5

208. S. Wilson

Extract from a Journal Kept During a Journey to the Ruins of Babylon

English journal extract, 1810

Chapter 4

209. George Gordon, Lord Byron

To Belshazzar

English poem, 1814-1815

Version: McGann 1980-1993

Chapter 5

210. George Gordon, Lord Byron

Hebrew Melodies

English poetry, 1815

Version: McGann 1980-1993

Chapter 5

211. Claudius James Rich

Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon

English travel and antiquarian account, 1813

Version: 1815

Chapter 4

212. Thomas Maurice

Observations Connected with Astronomy and Ancient History...

On the Ruins of Babylon

English antiquarian, 1816

Version: 1816

Chapter 4

213. Thomas Smart Hughes

Belshazzar's Feast

English poem, 1818

Version: 1818

Chapter 5

214. Claudius James Rich

Second Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon

English travel and antiquarian account, 1818

Version: 1818

Chapter 4

215. John Martin

The Fall of Babylon

English mezzotint, 1819

Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; British Museum, London

Chapter 5

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216. George Gordon, Lord Byron

Sardanapalus

English play, 1821

Version: McGann 1980-1993

Chapter 5

217. Robert Ker Porter

Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia

English travel and antiquarian account, 1821-1822

Version: 1821-1822

Chapter 4

218. Henry Hart Milman

Belshazzar

English poem, 1822

Version: 1822

Chapter 5

219. Giaocchino Antonio Rossini (libretto by Gaetano Rossi)

Semiramide

Italian opera, first performed 1823

Version: 1859

Chapter 5

220. John Martin

Belshazzar's Feast

Mezzotint, England, 1826

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Tate Britain, London; Paul Mellon Collection, Yale, USA

Chapter 5

221. James Silk Buckingham

Travels in Mesopotamia

English travel and antiquarian account, 1827

Version: 1827

Chapter 4

222. Eugene Delacroix

La Mort de Sardanapale

Oil on canvas, France, 1827

Musée du Louvre, Paris

Chapter 5

223. George Keppel

Personal Narrative of a Journey from India to England

English travel and antiquarian account, 1827

Version: 1827

Chapter 4

224. Robert Mignan

Travels in Chaldæa

English travel and antiquarian account, 1829

Version: 1829

Chapter 4

225. Hector Berlioz

La Mort de Sardanapale

French cantata, first performed 1830

Part lost. Version: 2005

Chapter 5

226. Washington Allston

Belshazzar's Feast

Oil on canvas, USA, 1830

Detroit Institute of Art

Chapter 5

227. Samuel Colman

The Coming of the Messiah and the Destruction of Babylon

Oil on canvas, England, 1830

Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, UK

Chapter 5

228. Eduard Bendeman

Die trauernden Juden in Babylon

Oil on canvas, Germany, 1832

Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Köln

Chapter 5

229. Joseph Mallord William Turner (from a sketch by Robert Ker Porter)

Babylon

Oil on canvas, 1833-1836

In series, *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible*.

Chapter 5

230. Claudius James Rich

Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon

English travel and antiquarian accounts, 1839

Version: 1839

Chapter 4

231. Franz Liszt

The Death of Sardanapalus

Italian Opera, 1840s

Never performed, libretto lost

Chapter 5

232. Francis Rawdon Chesney

The Expedition for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris

English survey report, 1850

Version: 1850

Chapter 4

233. Giuseppe Verdi

***Nabucco* (originally *Nabucudonosor*)**

Italian opera, first performed 1842

Version: 2005

Chapter 5

234. Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld

The Writing on the Wall

Engraving, Germany, 1850-1860

In series, *Die Bibel in Bildern*.

Chapter 5

235. J.C. Hoefer

Chaldée, Assyrie, Medie, Babylonie, Mésopotamie, Phénicie, Palmyrène

French historical synthesis, 1852

Version: 1852

Chapter 5

236. Austen Henry Layard

Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon

English travel and antiquarian account, 1853

Version: 1853b

Chapter 4

237. Edgar Degas

Semiramis Building Babylon

Oil on canvas, France, 1861

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Chapter 5

238. Jules Oppert

Expédition Scientifique en Mésopotamie I: Relation du Voyage et Résultats de l'Expédition

French travel and antiquarian account, 1863

Version: 1863

Chapter 4

239. Simeon Solomon

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace

Watercolour, England, 1863

Private collection

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240. Arnold Kemball

English excavation report, 1864-1865

Unpublished. In British Museum Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities Correspondence 1826-1867.

Chapter 4

241. Paul Gustave Doré

Belshazzar* or *Daniel Interpreting the Writing on the Wall

Engraving, France, 1865

In series, *The Illlustrated Bible*.

Chapter 5

242. Peter Ludwig Hertel

Sardanapal

Ballet, Germany, c.1865

Chapter 5

243. Edward John Poynter

By the Rivers of Babylon

Woodcut, England, 1865

In series, *Illustrations for Dalziel's Bible Gallery*. Tate Britain

Chapter 5

244. Paul Gustave Doré

The Tower of Babel

Engraving, France, 1866

In series, *The Illlustrated Bible*.

Chapter 5

245. Siegfried Detler Bendixen

Building the City and the Tower of Babel

Lithograph, Germany, 1870s

In *Bible printed by Edward Gover*, Stapleton collection, UK

246. Ford Madox Brown

The Dream of Sardanapalus

Watercolour on paper, USA, 1871

Delaware Art Museum

Chapter 5

247. George Woolliscroft Rhead (after Ford Madox Brown)

The Dream of Sardanapalus

Etching, England, 1871-1872

British Museum Department of the Ancient Near East

Chapter 5

248. Bendemann, Eduard

Wegführung der Juden in die babylonische Gefangenschaft

Oil on canvas, Germany, 1872

Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Chapter 5

249. William Whetmore Storey

Semiramis

Sculpture, USA, 1873

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Chapter 5

250. P. V. N. Myers

Remains of Lost Empires

English travel and antiquarian account, 1874

Version: 1875

Chapter 5

251. Edwin Long

The Babylonian Marriage Market

Oil on canvas, England, 1875

Royal Holloway College, University of London

Chapter 5

252. Friedrich Delitzsch

Wo lag das Paradies?

German antiquarian study, 1881

Version: 1881

Chapter 6

253. George Rawlinson

Egypt and Babylon, from Scripture and Profane Sources

English historical synthesis, 1885

Version: 1885

Chapter 5

254. Ferdinand Knab

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

German colour lithograph, 1886

In series, *The Seven Wonders of the World*, published in *Munchener Bilderbogen*. Private collection.

Chapter 5

255. Fernand Khnopff

Istar

Lithograph, Belgium, 1888

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Chapter 5

256. Herbert Gustave Schmalz

The Daughters of Judah in Babylon

Oil on canvas, England, 1892

Private collection

Chapter 5

257. Hormuzd Rassam

Ashur and the Land of Nimrod

English memoir, 1897

Version: 1897

Chapter 4

258. Friedrich Delitzsch

Ex Oriente Lux! Ein Wort sur Förderung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft

German statement on foundation of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, 1898

Version: 1898

Chapter 6

259. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*

German academic journal, 1898-

(Individual articles cited in bibliography)

Chapter 6

260. Walter Andrae

Watercolour paintings and pencil sketches of contemporary Babylon, 1899-1903

Vorderasiatisches Museum, Pergamon Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

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261. Vardges Sureniant

Semiramis at the Corpse of Ara, King of Armenia

Oil on canvas, Armenia, 1899

Chapter 5

262. ***Nyahbinghi chants***

Rastafarian chants, twentieth century

Version: http://rastaites.com/livity/chants.htm

Chapter 7

263. **Robert Koldewey, Walter Andrae and others**

Reconstruction Models: The Ishtar Gate, Processional Way, Esagila and Etemenanki

German architectural models, early-mid twentieth century

Vorderasiatisches Museum, Pergamon Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Chapter 6

264. ***Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft***

German monograph series, 1900-

(Individual volumes cited in bibliography)

Chapter 6

265. Friedrich Delitzsch

Babel und Bibel

German lecture series, 1902-1904

Version: 1902, 1903, 1905, 1906

Chapter 6

266. Rev. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut

Story of the Bible

Illustrated Bible stories, 1904

Version: 1957

Chapter 7

267. Walter Andrae

Set Designs for Sardanapal, Historische Pantomime

Sketches, Ashur, 1907

Version: Andrae and Boehmer 1989

Chapter 6

268. Robert Koldewey

Wiedererstehendes Babylon

German archaeological account, 1913

Version: 1913, 1914

Chapter 6

269. D. W. Griffith (Director and Producer)

Intolerance: Love's Struggle Through the Ages

American film, 1916

Chapter 7

270. Walter Andrae

Designs for the Reconstructed Ishtar Gate and Processional Way

Architectural projections, Berlin, 1927

Version: Andrae and Boehmer 1989

Chapter 6

271. Fritz Lang (Director)

Metropolis

German film, 1927

Chapter 7

272. M. C. Escher

Tower of Babel

Dutch woodcut, 1928

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273. Walter Andrae and others

The Ishtar Gate and Processional Way of Babylon

Architectural reconstruction, Berlin, 1927-1930

Vorderasiatisches Museum, Pergamon Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Chapter 6

274. Eckhard Unger

Babylon: Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier

German archaeological account, 1931

Version: 1931

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Frontispiece by Herbert Anger after design by Eckhard Unger

275. Leonard Woolley

Ziggurat of Nabonidus

English architectural drawing, 1939

In Woolley, *Ur Excavations, Volume V: The Ziggurat and its Surroundings*. Version: Woolley 1939

Chapter 7

276. Robert Rossen (Director)

Alexander the Great

American film, 1956

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277. Bob Marley and the Wailers

Babylon by Bus

Jamaican reggae music album, 1978

Chapter 7

278. Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities

Reconstructions at Babylon

On-site reconstructions of central Babylon, Iraq, 1978-1990

Chapter 7

279. Franco Rosso (Director)

Babylon

British film, 1980

Chapter 7

280. Achiel Pauwels

The Table of Babel

Mixed media, Belgium, 1981

Sint Pieter, Ghent

Chapter 7

281. Paula Rego

How Many Miles to Babylon?

Etching, London, 1989

Leeds City Art Gallery, UK

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282. Alan Potter

Table of Babel

Mural, London, 1994

Old Street, Shoreditch, London

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283. Pamela Kleeman

No Place Like Babylon

Mixed media sculpture, Australia, 1997

Chapter 7

284. Roberto Gonzalez Fernandez

"Babel" – Caja de Palabras

Bronze sculpture, Spain, 1998

In series, *Cajas*.

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285. Anne Desmet

Tower of Babel

Mixed media, UK, 1999

Private collection

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286. Paul Marcus

Babel

Etching, New York, 1999

Chapter 7

287. Nadine Cabessa

Tower of Babel

Mixed media sculpture, France, c.2000

Saphir 9, Chevreuse, France

Chapter 7

288. Anne Desmet

Tower of Babel (Sandstone)

Mixed media, UK, 2000

Whitworth Gallery, University of Manchester

Chapter 7

289. Anne Desmet

Tower of Babble

Mixed media, UK, 2000

Hart Gallery, London

Chapter 7

290. Rene Gehringer

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Switzerland, 1999-2000

Steelart Gallery, Langwiesen, Switzerland

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291. Pascal Amicucci

Tower of Babel

Porcelain sculpture, France, 2001

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292. Saddam Hussein

Zabibah and the King

Arabic novel, 2001

Chapter 7

293. Michael Lassel

Tower of Babel

Oil on canvas, Germany, 2001

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294. *Tower of Babel*

Souvenir coins, Israel, 2002

In series, *Biblical Art*

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295. Julee Holcombe

Babel Revisited

Digital print, USA, 2004

Conner Contemporary Art, Washington, D. C.

Chapter 7

296. Oliver Stone (Director)

Alexander

American film, 2004

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